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# PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

BY

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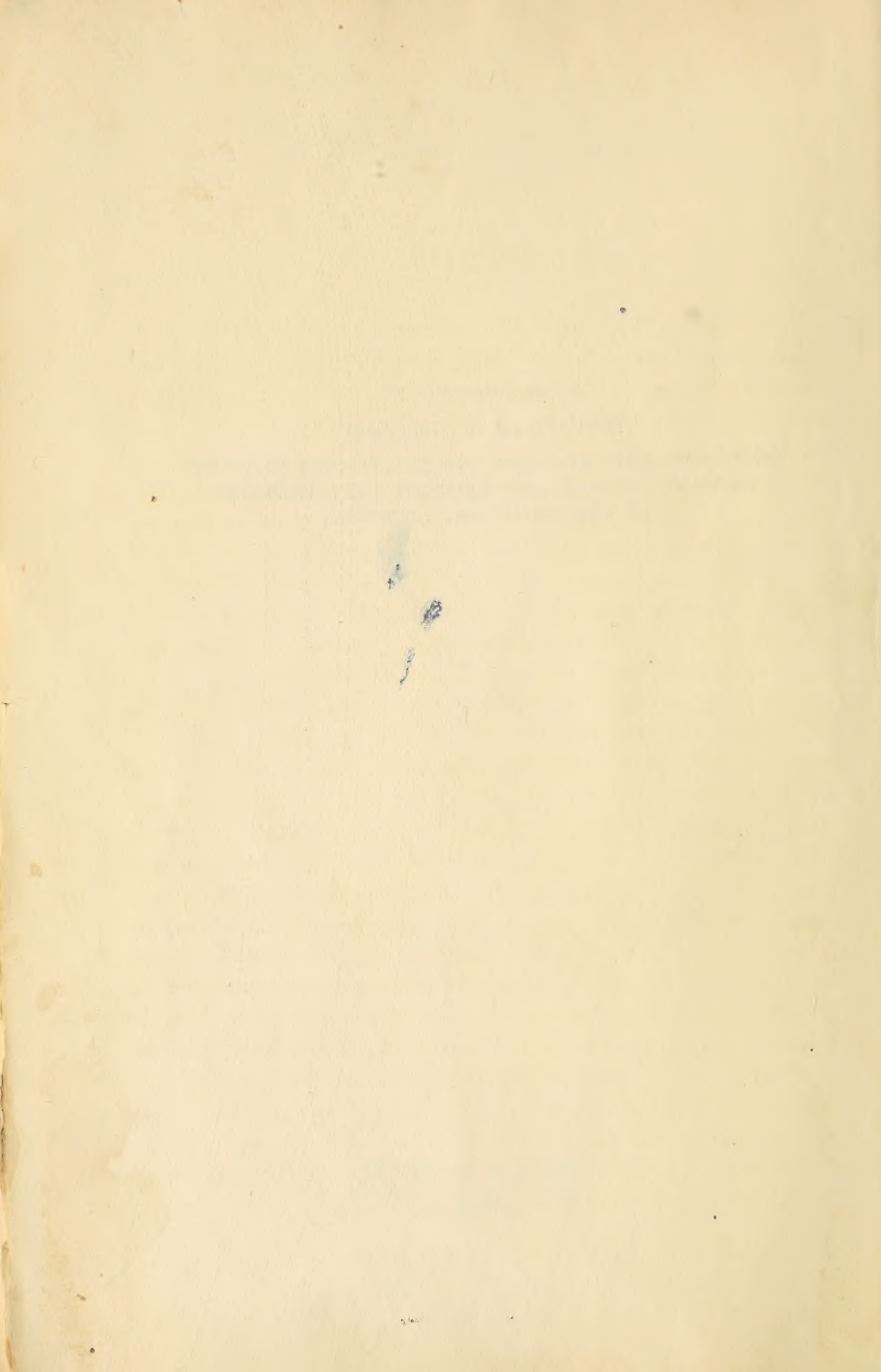
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TO THE MEMORY OF  
EDWARD KIDDER GRAHAM

GENTLEMAN, SCHOLAR, FRIEND, INSPIRING TEACHER OF YOUTH  
BRILLIANT LEADER OF MEN, EXPONENT AND INTERPRETER  
OF THE SOUTH'S BEST TRADITIONS





## PREFACE

This book is the outgrowth of several years' study of public educational problems in the United States, especially in the South, through courses in the history of education given at Trinity College and the University of North Carolina for teachers and prospective teachers and administrators. In such courses the aim has been to consider the principal problems of administration, support, and supervision of present-day education in the Southern States and to seek an understanding of their meaning in the light of their historical growth. The book is therefore a study of actual educational progress in the South rather than of educational theories; and the relation between education and economic, social, political, and religious influences is given emphasis.

The book attempts to give the first general survey yet published in a single volume of the growth of public educational organization and practices in those eleven States which formed the Confederacy. The study seeks to trace the development of the democratic principles of education in the South, to explain their apparently slow application or practical acceptance, and to point out from the past certain valuable lessons for the educational problems of the present. The book has been prepared for the purpose of assisting the teacher, the educational administrator, and the public to a more intelligent understanding of the present educational situation in the Southern States and of their respective tasks in meeting it. As far as possible, therefore, the public educational problems of today are set forth in the light of their historical development. Another purpose in mind in the preparation of the volume has been to make accessible to the student and the teacher certain valuable but scattered and more or less inaccessible materials on the educational history of the

Southern States. Another volume now in preparation will include valuable documentary and source materials illustrating the evolution of the democratic ideal of education in those States and supplementing the present volume.

The principles of universal education and the equality of educational opportunity have in theory gradually found rather wide acceptance in the South, but their practical application has been surprisingly slow. This appears in the obvious inequality that exists between city children and rural children and is shown in the school term, in buildings and equipment, in teaching skill, in high-school advantages, and in professional supervision and direction now provided for the city and for the rural communities. Eighty per cent of the school population in the South live in rural sections and the other 20 per cent live in towns and cities. That the educational advantages of the 20 per cent are in almost every way superior to those of the 80 per cent is universally accepted by those acquainted with the conditions. In the South the city child receives nearly 30 per cent more and better education every year than the rural child receives. The rural school usually lacks intelligent direction and oversight and is without unity; it is often colorless because it has not yet been led to respond to the remarkable social, industrial, and educational changes which have taken place in recent years. Improvements have been made in several directions. There is uniformity of improved texts, but most texts in use in the country schools were prepared primarily for the city schools. There is more specific training of teachers now than formerly, but such training is too often colored by the needs and practices of the city schools. The legally prescribed courses of study for the rural schools are often of the cut-and-dried type and in the hands of the usual rural teacher become outlines for dreary drills. There has been an increase in support, and the tendency is toward the professional direction of school work generally; but both in support and administrative direction the rural school is seriously neglected. Moreover, rural conditions are still uninviting and

unsatisfying, and the result is that the most capable teachers and the best-trained administrators and supervisors are led away from rather than to rural-school work.

For these reasons public education in the rural sections of the South becomes a most insistent and immediately urgent task. During the past dozen years commendable educational advancement has been made, but it has been confined in the main to improvement of the town and city schools. Corresponding progress has not been witnessed in the rural communities, where the principle of coöperation has not been widely and intelligently applied in the solution of common questions and the promotion of common interests. The urban communities have learned to co-operate in education and other undertakings in a manner not yet fully learned or appreciated by the rural and sparsely settled communities. And in large measure here is the explanation of the inadequate provision for the education of the boys and girls who live in rural sections. Happily, however, the South appears now to be entering upon a new era in rural-life development. The amazing economic wealth, the increasingly large programs for road-building, and the movement for improved agricultural practices are full of promise for the educational and social development of the South. And in these interests is the foundation for rural betterment.

Many of the causes of the apparent neglect of public education in the South in recent years are not altogether unlike those which prevented a more wholesome growth of public schools before 1860 or those causes which helped to retard progress between 1876 and 1900. Sparsity of population, lingering results of the old plantation system, farm tenancy, poor means of communication, and other factors have always been obstacles in the way of public schools. Prior to 1860 they were obstinate, and since that time their influence on schools has been mischievous. Added to these retarding factors were others which had their origin in the war and the period immediately following it. And it was not until the opening years of the present century



that the Southern States were sufficiently recovered from the economic and moral evils of that period to set themselves with energy and hopefulness to the great task of educating their children.

The substance of parts of Chapters III, X, and XI appeared first in the *South Atlantic Quarterly* and the *Sewanee Review*, and a part of Chapter IV in the *High School Journal*. They are here included through the courtesy of these publications. Certain portions of the materials dealing with North Carolina are taken from the author's "Public-School Education in North Carolina" (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1916) and are here used by permission of the publishers.

Acknowledgments are here made to Professor William K. Boyd of Trinity College (North Carolina), to Professor J. G. deR. Hamilton of the University of North Carolina, and to Professor Stuart G. Noble of Millsaps College (Mississippi) for reading parts of the manuscript, for criticisms concerning the plan of the book, and for other helpful suggestions.

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# PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH

## CHAPTER I

### EUROPEAN ANTECEDENTS

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. The principle of universal education has evolved through distinct periods of social, political, and economic development in the South.

2. A knowledge of European antecedents and influences prevailing during the period of colonization is necessary if colonial education is to be properly understood.

3. Economic conditions in England during the colonizing period produced unrest and vexatious governmental problems.

4. Political conditions were likewise unsettled and led to strange relations between the rulers on the one hand and Parliament and the people on the other.

5. Religious changes in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also greatly influenced American colonial life.

6. In these various changes and conditions are found the principal motives for colonization.

7. Economic interests were powerful in the Southern colonies and economic extremes early developed.

8. As a result the selective idea in education was inevitable in the South in the early times.

9. After 1700, large immigrations of Germans and Scotch-Irish came to the South, where their educational influence was extensive.

10. On the ideals and principles to which the early colonists were devoted, educational theories and practices were to be built up and were to develop and change as the conditions required.

11. Every advance in education has been made on the background of the past, and present-day tasks in education can be understood only through a knowledge of conditions out of which they have evolved.

The growth of the principle of universal education in the Southern States is marked by distinct periods in social, political, and economic development in that region. The first period was that of the transplanting of European traditions and customs, and extended from the date of the earliest settlements to near the middle of the eighteenth century. During that time the colonists were influenced by conditions and practices of the mother countries. The second period extended from about 1750 to the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. It was distinct for its attempts to modify educational practices so as to meet the new conditions which were produced by the Revolution and the political beginnings of a new people. During this period very interesting and influential educational experiments were made. The third period extended from the thirties to the Civil War and was marked by the rapid development of Jeffersonian democracy and the steady growth of belief in the people.

The Civil War and reconstruction constituted another period, which, though brief, was very distinct because of the widespread distress and uncertainty which it produced. The years from 1876 to the close of the century formed still another period, which has become well known for the heroic efforts made during those years to build out of the wreck of the old a new civilization, but on safer and more permanent educational ideals. Finally, the years from 1900 to the present have been significant for the educational revival which awakened the entire South shortly after the opening of the new century. That awakening was rapidly gaining at the outbreak of the World War, which served to draw sharp attention to the weaknesses as well as the strength of public educational enterprises. In the South, as in other sections of the country, the challenge to the public school became clearer and more distinct. As a result of the war public education here as elsewhere in the United States has begun to show promise of wider and safer extension and growth.

Public education in the South is now distinctively American in its essential ideals and character. But the educational customs



and practices of the colonial period can be understood only in view of European antecedents and influences. This is true of all the English colonies, but especially true of Virginia and the Carolinas: of Virginia and South Carolina, where the dominating influences were, as in England, especially aristocratic; and somewhat true of North Carolina, whose earliest settlers were immigrants from Virginia and brought with them some of the educational practices of that colony. The general mental attitude of all these colonies towards education was therefore much like that of the mother country. That attitude is more easily understood by a view of conditions in England at the time these colonies were settled.

The population of England at the close of the sixteenth century has been variously estimated at from three to five millions, made up of two main classes: the self-supporting and independent class and the dependent class. The first group was composed of the nobility, the higher clergy, knights, country gentlemen, lawyers, the lesser clergy, freeholders and farmers, shopkeepers and tradesmen, and artisans and craftsmen. The dependent group was made up of journeymen, apprentices, vagrants, "thieves and sturdy beggars," whose employment, wages, and migration were determined by some one of the upper classes.

At the accession of James I in 1603 probably half the population of England was made up of this dependent class, which was very largely produced by certain social and economic changes which modified the entire structure of English society before the seventeenth century. One of these modifying influences was the change from the medieval to the modern land and agricultural system. Much of the poverty and vagabondage of the time are often attributed to the hard times resulting from inclosures and sheep-raising and the consequent eviction of numerous tenants who had made a living of tillage, to the destruction of great bands of feudal retainers, and to the dissolution of the monasteries. Chiefly in these changes may be found the explanation of the growth of this dependent class, which came to be such a vexatious

governmental problem and of sufficient menace to call for attention from Parliament. The problem was finally solved, as far as legislative enactment could solve it, by legislation which sought to deal with the poor and dependent.

For many years following the Black Death, which produced a scarcity of labor, the wool industry came to be very important. The increase in the price of wool was so rapid that by the beginning of the sixteenth century sheep-raising had become a far more profitable industry than farming, and at the same time it demanded fewer laborers. At first no hardship was worked by this change; but in the time of Henry VII and Henry VIII many landowners turned their attention to this industry, and the inclosure into sheep pastures of vast areas which had hitherto been used for tillage, furnishing work for many laborers, threw out of employment many people whose livelihoods had hitherto depended on arable farming. The result was that those who had land or money enough to rent and stock it with sheep grew richer, while the poorer people, dispossessed of land and rendered helpless and inefficient under the changed industrial system, were driven out to beg or to steal for a living. Frequently "farmers were got rid of either by fraud or force, or tired out with repeated wrongs into parting with their property," and when other means failed eviction was resorted to. Many evicted farmers were thus reduced to a state of pauperism, and whole families were sent on the road to live a life of vagrancy. As the peasants increased, their economic condition grew more unbearable. There was evidence of much social discontent. The wrongs of the poorer classes found indignant expression in the literature of the period, which was often full of protests against the evils of inclosures and the consequent depopulation of the rural regions.

The large bands of retainers had been a more or less lawless element throughout the period of feudal power. Feudal armies had greatly impoverished many rural regions, especially during the Wars of the Roses. During the peace of the Tudor period numerous retainers, without wages, became marauders under the

protection of their lords and stole for a living. A statute was passed against them near the close of the fifteenth century, and as they were dismissed from their masters' protection they became capable vagabonds and rogues.

The problem of unemployment thus became serious. Opportunities for work had been decreased in corporate towns by the exclusive policy pursued by the guilds. Moreover, the kingdom had been subjected to heavy taxation by Henry VIII; the coinage had been so debased by him that Elizabeth's efforts at reform were not immediate or thorough enough to save the laboring man from its evil consequences; and the prices of necessary commodities doubled and often trebled without any corresponding advance in wages. Hundreds were thus forced from the means of a livelihood; the needy increased in great numbers, while the means of relief were constantly lessening. Even the guild and town corporations found it difficult to make provision for their own sick and dependent.

The dissolution of the monasteries also deprived the vagrants of certain sources of comfort and relief. Henry VIII held that these institutions were dangerous to the new régime, and although the monastic authorities might appear tractable and obedient, it was feared that they disapproved of the violent measures which had terminated papal control in England. Many of the monasteries were wealthy and held extensive landed estates which the aristocracy of the kingdom coveted. Moreover, evidences of corruption and of evil living in them, and alleged immoral and irreligious motives, seemed to warrant drastic royal action. Accordingly, in 1536 Parliament suppressed nearly four hundred of those which had an annual income of less than £200, and three years later the larger ones were swept away also and their possessions added to the king's revenues. In a few years monasticism practically disappeared from England, and hundreds of institutions harboring thousands of monks and nuns ceased to exist. The usefulness of the system had already begun to wane, and modern society has provided agencies which perform the

social services of monasticism far more effectively than they were ever performed by monasteries and convents. Yet, with the dissolution of these institutions, there disappeared many useful means of education and poor relief.

Finally, the Chantries Act of 1547 completed this royal confiscation and spoliation of religious endowments. Most of the guilds and corporations had funds set apart for providing masses for their deceased founders, for chantries, for the comfort and support of their infirm and sick members, and for numerous other charitable purposes. These foundations supported priests, lent money without interest to poor members, apprenticed their children and cared for their widows and orphans, and in numerous other ways provided for the education and protection of the unfortunate. The confiscation of these means of education and charity told disastrously against the poorer classes.

These changes greatly increased the number of wanderers and vagrants and, at the same time, destroyed many sources of relief. Indiscriminate charity had increased the number of idle poor. The "open house," kept alike by barons and the clergy; the mendicant practices of the friars and other religious orders; the habits of the wandering scholar and his A B C shooters and of the pious pilgrim who begged his way from shrine to shrine,—all these agencies helped to foster a class of beggars whose profession was far from undignified and whose activities were by no means disgraceful. These beggars were of many kinds. A contemporary account gives two dozen varieties, from the impotent poor to the Abraham man, who, like the fool in "King Lear," feigned lunacy and begged "charity for poor Tom" in the hope of awakening the pity of the passers-by.

Numerous early attempts made to deal with this condition sought to repress the evil by severe punishments, but no effective relief was afforded until Parliament turned attention to the problem. It soon became recognized as necessary for the more prosperous members of the community to contribute means to care for the dependent members. Collections were made for this



purpose, first in the form of charitable and voluntary offerings, but later as compulsory contributions levied by the State. Still later it was found that if the "sturdy" beggars and those able to do so were to be forced to work, some employment had to be found for them. Numerous acts of Parliament in the fifteenth century and throughout the first half of the sixteenth, though well intended, failed to bring relief; and it was left to the wisdom of Elizabeth to place the whole matter of contributions for poor relief on a satisfactory basis.

The problem was finally dealt with in a series of laws which undertook to provide a stricter punishment for sturdy beggars and to inaugurate a compulsory assessment to aid the deserving poor. This was especially true of legislation between 1572 and 1597, which made more explicit and practicable the directions for controlling the bad condition, for collecting and distributing the funds for poor relief, and for setting the able-bodied vagrants to work. This legislation marked the beginning of the end of the free vagabond life of the period, and the principal features of the earlier acts were incorporated in the law of 1601, which became the real statutory foundation of the poor law and the basis of a national system of poor relief.

For this reason and because of its influence on the practice of the colonists, this law is very significant. Under it definite compulsory contributions were assessed on ratable values for funds to relieve the poor and unfortunate, and overseers of the poor were appointed with several duties. They were to superintend the distribution of relief to the impotent poor, to apprentice the children of the poor and see that trades were properly taught them, to set to work able-bodied vagrants and beggars, and to attend to the general enforcement of the law. While this and similar laws were far from educational in intent, nevertheless they became the basis of the only training given a very large number of children. It should be noted, however, that the enforcement of these acts was put into the hands of local justices who were trained in the interpretation and administration of such legislation.



Political conditions in England prior to and during its early colonizing period should also be noted. During the first forty years of the seventeenth century, when immigration to America began, the claims of the monarchy were perhaps more exorbitant than at any time in English history. For example, it was seditious in subjects to dispute what kings and rulers could do in the height of their power. And not only was this view held by the rulers themselves, but others attributed to them absolute authority, and their powers thus became real in the lives of their subjects. Notable contests between the king and Parliament gave the latter slightly larger participation in the government, though the conflict became increasingly intense and critical. Parliamentary sympathizers relied for their cause more and more on the "ancient rights and liberties of the people." Through the Petition of Right appeal was made by Parliament to the Great Charter and to other declarations of personal liberties; in 1641 the Grand Remonstrance contained such expressions as "the people," "the rights of the people," "the liberties of subjects," and many rights and privileges were finally incorporated in the Bill of Rights in 1689.

During the contests and while the balance of powers was unsettled, American colonization was progressing and distinct ideas of civil liberty were brought to the new country. For it was not the people of strong royalist spirit who emigrated, but those of the middle and lower classes, who were not on very comfortable terms with the king; and among these classes of people the views of Parliament were widespread. The same views were very largely held also by the Virginia Company, which played such an important part in influencing the colonists.

Yet unanimity did not exist even among those who left England; and strong as the predilection was among the founders of America for self-government and representative institutions, the Old-World differences of view were transferred to the colonies and played a part in local struggles there.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cheyney, *European Background of American History*, chap. xiii.

Local government came very close to the average Englishman in the seventeenth century, and as sheriff, justice of the peace, churchwarden, or other official he had a very active part in local affairs. Certain political institutions and customs controlled his actions and influenced his habits and ideas concerning local government.

The sheriff was the historic head of the shire, or county, and had numerous and varied duties. The justices of the peace, the "men of all work," represented the rural gentry and were very influential in English affairs throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. James I said of them, "At London you are like ships in a sea, which show like nothing, but in your country villages you are like ships in a river, which look like great things." From twenty to sixty of these officers were found in each county. The most important duties as a body were performed at the "quarter sessions," regularly held in October, in midwinter, in spring, and in midsummer. Few interests in human life escaped their attention. Up to 1603 nearly three hundred statutes had been enacted in which the justices were given jurisdiction. One of their most important duties was the enforcement of the apprenticeship and poor laws. The churchwardens, whose position and duties were not so ecclesiastical as the name implies, were appointed by the justices annually at their Easter session, were ex-officio overseers of the poor, and were in charge of the relief of the poor. Estimating the costs and levying local assessments for the purpose were among their most important local duties.

Certain religious changes in Europe became powerful influences in American colonial life also. The Renaissance had affected the religious life of all Western Europe. The part of the Church in the direction of European affairs began to be questioned by the new national rulers; the right of papal interference became a matter of serious dispute; a change appeared in the attitude of the laity towards the Church; and there was rapidly developing a desire in the lay mind for each individual to be free

in his religious life instead of being blindly obedient to ecclesiastical authority. A new belief in the importance of the individual appeared in the value which the laity attached to education and in the tendency to leave to secular rather than to ecclesiastical control the education and care of the poor. Moreover, the English Humanists turned their attention to an examination of the Church and its teachings and found a great need for religious reform. Although their efforts were not fruitless, reform did not come directly through them, or as they desired, but through Luther and his teaching, which made powerful appeal, especially to the sentiment of the German people. These changes had their influence in England also.

When England became a colonizing nation, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, there were at least four well-defined religious parties among her people. There were the adherents of the Established Church, with its prayer book, articles of religion, uniformity of service, and the practices and the doctrines of the official state church. Anglicanism was the national church, just as Catholicism was the church of Spain. At the beginning of the seventeenth century Anglicanism had for a generation been the only religious system in authority in England, and it was therefore strongly intrenched through the authority of the law and the sanction of patriotic feeling. A second religious class was the Catholics, who held allegiance to that religious system which claimed the Pope as its earthly head. And from the time Henry VIII attacked the supremacy of the Pope and the practices of the medieval church, they were faithful to Rome in spite of frequent rigorous applications of harsh statutes against them.

Another religious class was the Puritans, who at first protested against certain ceremonies and formulas of Anglicanism, but later turned from these considerations to the more vital and practical question of morals. They believed that the Established Church was drifting toward Catholicism. Still another class was the "Separatists," or "Independents," to whom the idea of a

national church was idolatrous, and who believed in the absolute independence of each local congregation.

From 1629 to 1640, during the personal government of Charles I, when there were no sessions of Parliament, the Star Chamber, the High Commission, and the Privy Council were powerful administrative instruments which were in sympathy with Anglicanism. During this time the Puritans and other dissenting sects were greatly oppressed. It was during this period and under this régime that the great Puritan migrations to America were made. In migrating to the New World the Puritans were doubtless somewhat influenced by their unfavorable economic conditions at home, but they turned to America as a place where religious liberty would also be secure. Later on, during the Commonwealth period, when the Puritan régime was so distasteful to them, thousands of Cavaliers emigrated to Virginia, and between 1649 and 1669 the population of that colony increased from fifteen thousand to twenty-five thousand.

The social, economic, political, and religious conditions described were among those from which many of the early colonists came. In those conditions may be found the incentives which prompted many Englishmen to come to America. But there were other motives for colonization. Throughout the sixteenth century there were frequent complaints of a rapidly increasing population. Class distinctions and unfavorable industrial conditions, working painful hardships on the poor and the less prosperous part of society, persistently called for relief. Crimes were numerous and on the increase in spite of cruel penal legislation. It was a common belief that the surplus population would readily flow to the New World. Free land was also an attraction; and the discovery of tobacco as a profitable product proved a powerful incentive to immigration to Virginia. Many glowing accounts of the colony reached England and appealed to the various classes: the restless, the impatient, and the adventurous; those of straitened economic circumstances and of restricted social conditions; the yeoman, whose children must always remain yeomen; those who desired



land and the position of gentlemen; and those to whom the avenues of advancement were closed at home,—all these classes saw in Virginia attractive social and economic opportunities.

The force of economic interest was therefore very powerful in the Southern colonies. Economic conditions were likewise very influential in the development of social institutions. The road to wealth and influence lay in agricultural pursuits, where servant labor was essential. In practically all the Southern colonies it was natural that economic extremes should early develop; side by side with the influential planter class, but in striking contrast to it, there grew up the indentured servant class, which constituted a great part of the population. The servant was bound for a term of from two to seven years to the planter who transported him or who had by contract secured control over him. At the end of his term of indenture he became a freeman. By the middle of the seventeenth century the importation of African slaves was also getting to be a profitable industry, and life in Virginia had assumed the character which it retained for more than a century. There developed, therefore, a distinction between the small land-owner and the master of vast estates; the plantation, more or less isolated, but with its abundant necessities and many luxuries of life, became the social unit and helped to develop the aristocratic spirit.

With such traditions in such an environment educational practices in the Southern colonies were more or less identical with those of the mother country. On account of the peculiar religious interests in England in the seventeenth century education in most of the colonies was given a decidedly religious color, and the religious conception and the ecclesiastical domination of education were adopted. Where the Puritan influences were most pronounced there appeared a tendency to provide education for all the people; but in those colonies where the Established Church was the dominating religious influence the aristocratic and selective idea in education prevailed, and the education of the masses of the population was neglected except as it was cared for (as



in England) by the apprenticeship and the poor-law system. The Southern colonists, therefore, inherited their educational scheme directly from England. They brought with them the idea of the Latin grammar school, which was largely classical in the material of instruction and furnished a secondary and higher education for the training of the more prosperous part of society. They also brought for the upper classes the tutorial system of education. Thus Virginia, which was the first attempt made at reproducing the social system, the government, the Established Church, and class distinctions of the mother country, reproduced also the English educational system. The planter class adopted for the education of their families the practice which prevailed in England; and the apprenticeship plan and the poor laws furnished a system of industrial training for orphans, the poor, and the dependent classes, who were in large measure without the means of formal intellectual training. In the main these traditions were inherited in the other colonies also.

Before 1700 the American colonies were almost entirely English, but after that time immigrants came from two other nationalities, the German and the Scotch-Irish. These people came in such great numbers that in 1775 it was estimated that fully 225,000 Germans and 385,000 Scotch-Irish were in the colonies which won independence from England. European influences had led to this emigration also. Religious intolerance, heavy taxes and general economic oppression, and the ravages of war were some of the causes that induced these people to seek new homes in America.

The religious differences between the Catholics and the Protestants, generally known as the Thirty Years' War, constituted the most destructive conflict that ever devastated Germany, setting back the material development of the country nearly two centuries. Thousands of villages were wiped out, the country was disastrously depopulated, and the few people left by the struggle were barbarized by losses and sufferings and by the ravages and atrocities of the brutalized soldiers. The political questions, territorial changes, and religious difficulties were adjusted by the

Treaty of Westphalia, but the material losses during the conflict had been so extensive that for a half century or more it was impossible to restore the economic development of the country, and the moral degeneration which followed the enormous losses of life and property was even more distressing.

This generation of warfare throughout all Germany was followed by another, in which the territorial ambitions of Louis XIV led to intermittent invasion of the German lands on the eastern border of France. These invasions culminated in 1688, when the armies of the French devastated the Rhenish Palatinate. Thousands of Palatines were driven from burning homes and devastated fields. A hope for bettering their earthly condition came in good reports from the American colonies under English rule, a hope which was made more vivid by such men as William Penn. Thousands of homeless and dejected Germans drifted down the Rhine, across to England, and thence to America. Many of them settled in New York and Pennsylvania, in Maryland and Virginia, and in Georgia and the Carolinas. Most of them landed at Philadelphia, but they soon learned of better opportunities in the South, and by the middle of the eighteenth century increasing numbers were found in that region. They occupied the counties of the valley and the piedmont section of Virginia; the territory along the Yadkin and Catawba Rivers and around New Bern and Wilmington in North Carolina; the counties of Orangeburg, Lexington, Barnwell, Newberry, Abbeville, Edgefield, and Charleston in South Carolina; and a portion of the territory along the Savannah River, between Savannah and Augusta.

The Scotch and the Scotch-Irish came in greater numbers than the Germans. The emigration of these people was largely the result of the horrors which had accompanied the suppression of Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth, the wholesale confiscation of its lands, the proscription of its religion, and the plantation among the Irish of an alien and hostile people.

The English nation definitely adopted the principles of the Reformation and applied them rigorously to Ireland. All persons

were ordered to attend the Anglican service, under penalty of fine; the mass was prohibited; the church revenues were taken from the priests; Irish Catholicism was finally proscribed by law; and fear that their religion would never be respected brought fresh terror to the Irish people. Moreover, the extraordinary growth of the spirit of adventure and the desire for rapid roads to wealth led England to adopt a policy of confiscating great tracts of fertile Irish lands where gigantic fortunes could be readily and easily amassed. Chronic disturbances between the English government and the Irish chiefs were seized upon as pretexts for the confiscations, which were skillfully and systematically made through means of severe examination of titles before suborned or intimidated juries. Thus, without any compensation the proprietary rights of many of the natives were lost.

Then followed the plantation of Ulster, which began in 1611, when a large confiscated area was regranted to proprietors who were mainly London merchants and the noblemen of the court, who introduced tenants from the northern part of England and the lowlands of Scotland. Men of Puritan tendencies were not reluctant to emigrate to Ireland, and as a result, for two decades of the seventeenth century, a large Presbyterian element was introduced into Ulster. Anglicanism was the legalized state church in Ireland, and the religion of the newcomers was not acknowledged or respected. Moreover, the industrial interests of Ulster were subordinated to those of England. The bitterness of theological animosity greatly increased, and soon other evils appeared.

In time a feverish restlessness pervaded Ireland, and the murmurs of discontent and social unrest foretold an approaching rebellion. Property rights were less secure than ever, all religious worship except the Anglican was made illegal, and religious animosities became more bitter. Rebellion broke out in 1641, and a general expulsion of the English was accompanied by disastrous barbarities. The rebellion was finally put down, but not until nearly half a million people had perished by the sword, by plague, or by an artificially produced famine which followed.

Conditions showed but slow improvement towards the close of the century. The navigation acts excluded Ireland from the advantages of colonial trade, industries were discouraged and crippled by prohibitive taxes, and the commercial legislation of England practically destroyed the wool and linen manufacturers. In addition to these economic disadvantages a form of religious persecution appeared after 1689. As a result of this combined economic and religious oppression and disadvantage thousands of these people emigrated and formed the largest body of European immigrants to America. Like the Germans, many of the Scotch-Irish finally settled in the South.

After the opening of the eighteenth century German and Scotch-Irish immigrants came to the Southern colonies in rather large numbers. The later educational influence of these people will be noted elsewhere in this study. For the present it is necessary merely to point out that wherever they settled, churches and schoolhouses were established almost immediately thereafter. Their schools were usually taught by the ministers of the local congregations. The school interests of the Scotch-Irish were especially strong. In the South, as elsewhere, they were the first to open classical schools, and for half a century or more their work was powerful for its influence on the religious and educational life of the South.

The causes or motives which led to colonization appear in the conditions described in the foregoing pages. Among them were the spirit of adventure, the desire for material wealth, the unrest and discontent produced by economic disadvantage and political confusion, and the insecurity of religious beliefs. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were times of oppressive economic conditions and intense religious restlessness and political disturbances. Moreover, England's resources were slender, and colonization was thought of as a means of obtaining relief from the persistent dangers of pauperism. Colonizing ventures, therefore, came to be viewed largely as commercial undertakings. For example, the Puritan migration to New England was stimulated not only by



religious but by economic and political causes, and the Southern colonies were almost entirely the outgrowth of the trading spirit and the influence of economic distress in the mother country.

It should be noted that the earliest settlers came to the South from those countries and peoples that had embraced Protestantism in some form. It was natural, therefore, that their first educational efforts should originate as undertakings of philanthropy or of the Church. But they also brought with them certain social, political, and economic ideals which later were to have a decided influence. On the ideals and principles to which they were devoted were to be built up the educational theories and practices which have since developed as changing conditions have required. The early educational interests of the colonists are to be viewed, therefore, in the light of the European conditions out of which they came. Moreover, many of the present theories and practices have their origin in those conditions and in colonial influences. For this reason the student of present educational conditions is likely to ask if colonial theories and practices could have been different under the peculiar circumstances of settlement and of political and economic influence, and if the lessons of those earlier times are valuable for the conditions and tasks of today.

These questions become important in a consideration of public education in the South. In the following pages an attempt is made to answer them. For the present it is sufficient to call the attention of the student to the stress and struggle of the strange conditions in which the colonists found themselves. The hardships and deprivations of the time taxed the faith and the heroism of the newcomers, but made them resourceful in dealing with circumstances which did not naturally promote immediate educational organization. Many of the colonists saw in education something very essential to their well-being. Some of them saw a close kinship between education and religion, and all of them were either intimately or remotely acquainted with the educational ideals and practices which prevailed in their old homes in Europe. Many of those practices were naturally transplanted



here, some continued to exist in part not only throughout the colonial days but far into the national period, while others have been modified from time to time by changing conditions. A study of present conditions, however, points clearly to the fact that every advance in education in the South, as elsewhere, has been made on the background of the past. The historical element therefore becomes increasingly important in the effort of the student, the teacher, and the administrator to test the validity of the practices or tendencies of present-day educational work. The practical parts of such work cannot be understood sympathetically except through an acquaintance with the conditions out of which they have grown and with the ideals or theories on which they have developed. Nor can present-day problems or tasks in education be intelligently and safely analyzed except through a knowledge of those practices which have evolved from the conditions of the past.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Explain the motives for the principal streams of settlers to the South during the early colonizing period.
2. The seventeenth century has been described as the period of the "transit of civilization." Explain the meaning of this.
3. What was the state of education for the lower classes in those countries from which the Southern colonists came? for the so-called higher classes?
4. Why were the early educational efforts in the South the undertakings of philanthropy or of the Church?
5. In what way were such efforts the result of the Protestant Revolt in European countries?
6. Why is it difficult for a common-school system to develop in countries or communities where class distinctions are marked?
7. Compare the early settlers in the South with those of the other colonies in origin, in motives for settlement, and in religious, political, and economic interests.

8. What influences were most powerful with the Southern colonists—the economic, political, or religious? Why?

9. How were the most potent influences of these colonists likely to reflect themselves in subsequent educational theory and practice?

10. What were the foundations on which education in the South was likely to be developed?

11. Were the new conditions into which the colonists came such as to promote or to delay educational organization? Explain.

12. What is the evidence that public education in the South is now essentially American in ideal and form?

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## CHAPTER II

### COLONIAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. From Virginia and South Carolina, which were more nearly like England than the other colonies, the most powerful educational and political influences in Southern life emanated during the colonial period.

2. Educational practices in the Southern colonies are to be explained, however, not only in the customs of England but also in other influences.

3. The plantation system, indentured servants, negro slavery, and the maintenance of the Established Church as a part of the social system tended to delay the growth of a healthy interest in schools and community coöperation.

4. Indirectly, however, educational interests were somewhat promoted through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an auxiliary of the Established Church, which aided in establishing schools and in supplying teachers, textbooks, and libraries. Charity schools became numerous in all the Southern colonies, through missionary and philanthropic agencies, which stimulated the benevolence of public-spirited people.

5. Evidence of creditable interest in certain kinds of educational facilities may be seen from the wills of the period, in numerous endowments, bequests, and philanthropic societies, and in the founding of schools for the education of poor children.

6. Evidence of slight educational interest on the part of the Assemblies appeared in most of the colonies.

7. Other evidences of colonial culture may be seen in the private libraries of the time, in the collections of books, and in the establishment of printing presses and the publication of newspapers.

8. Schools were not yet regarded as a function of the State, but education was not neglected, and opportunities for educational training were larger than is commonly thought.

9. Educational facilities were not so extensive in the South as in the North, because of differences in climate and in economic and other

conditions. The South has always been rural and agricultural, and the principle of coöperation has been slow to operate in that region.

10. The educational theories and practices of the South during colonial times are to be understood, therefore, just as present-day educational problems, in the light of the dominating economic, political, and social conditions of the period.

The principal points of English settlement in what is now the Southern States were Jamestown in Virginia, and Charleston in South Carolina. From these two colonies the most powerful educational and political influences in Southern life emanated during the colonial period. They were more nearly like the mother country than any of the other American colonies; in them appeared an attempt of England to reproduce herself on American soil. Educationally this attempt appeared in a transplanting of those traditions and practices which prevailed in England in the seventeenth century. In the main these practices consisted of a classical training (the tutorial system or education in England) for the well-to-do, and provision for the old English industrial training, through the poor-law and apprenticeship system, for the poorer classes. Moreover, some of the earlier settlers were familiar with educational provision through the means of endowments and foundations, which formed in England a favorite and popular means of educational support. In some of the colonies these endowments formed evidence of early educational interest as well as of the transference of English custom to America.

Educational practices in the Southern colonies had their explanation not alone, however, in the traditions and customs of the mother country. These influences were indeed powerful, as was also the political philosophy of seventeenth-century England, "that the great body of the people were to obey and not to govern, and that the social status of unborn generations was already fixed." This theory was not without its influence in the English colonies. But in addition to these influences other conditions and agencies were potent in determining the educational practices in the South before the revolutionary period.

One of the most influential of these conditions was the plantation system. The fertile soil and the mild climate lent themselves unstintingly to farming and to the development of extensive agricultural pursuits. The rivers and smaller streams served as convenient highways and often as the only means of communication. Along these the earliest settlers took up large tracts of land. From the beginning, therefore, the tendency was necessarily toward rural rather than urban life. With no towns, no diversity of pursuits, and with a population widely dispersed over vast acreages, compact communities were impossible, and local community interest in schools and the means of education was naturally slow to show itself. Through the agricultural and plantation system class distinctions developed and became another barrier to the growth of a healthy interest in public education, as that term is known today. With the introduction of white indentured servants and of negro slaves (who became useful and profitable in communities where agriculture was such a promising pursuit) these distinctions began early to develop, became greatly pronounced, and persisted in most of the Southern States, though they were most noticeable perhaps in South Carolina and Virginia.

The conditional servitude of white persons, under indentures or contracts, developed early in Virginia a servile class which came to be an important element in Southern society. As a rule these servants were transported convicts, political offenders, and orphans or other children kidnaped by adventurers and sold to the Southern planters, who bound them to labor for a term of years. Throughout the seventeenth century the importation of white servants was encouraged, but they seem to have been more numerous in Virginia than in any other colony. As late as 1698, however, South Carolina enacted a law encouraging the importation of white servants between the ages of sixteen and forty and prescribing their term of service.

The institution of negro slavery extended gradually and likewise became influential in Southern life. By the middle of the eighteenth century African slaves constituted fully half the



population of Virginia. Almost from its origin South Carolina was essentially an agricultural and planting colony with slave labor, and by the revolutionary period two thirds of its population consisted of negroes. The two main classes were the planters and the slaves, the latter constituting the foundation and the main support of the colony's entire industrial system. The indentured servant class was not so numerous as in Virginia, and, with the exception of the Germans and the Scotch-Irish, the small landowners and the poor white people were not numerous. By 1765 there was a comparatively large body of African slaves in North Carolina, but the white indentured servants were few. Large plantations were not so numerous as in Virginia or South Carolina, and the mass of the population were small landowners. The blacks became more or less numerous in Georgia, and after it became a royal colony in 1752 the indentured white servants differed in almost no respect from those of the other colonies except perhaps in smaller numbers.

The maintenance of the Established Church as a part of the social system was also a contributing cause of the slow educational growth in the South, where it had large power in the life of the people. In Virginia and the Carolinas the English Church was provided for by the charters, formally established by legislative enactment later, and remained established until the revolutionary period. The case was different in Georgia, however, which opened only two score years before the revolt from the mother country. The charter of that colony in 1732 guaranteed liberty of conscience and the free exercise of religion to all persons except Papists. Quarrels between the trustees and the colonists resulted twenty years later in the abrogation of the charter and the royal assumption of the government, and the English Church was immediately established in the colony. It was destined, however, to a short life.

Elaborate legislative measures were early enacted in Virginia for the support of the Establishment, and these were rigidly enforced. The Church grew more intolerant and hostile to liberty

as the population increased, and proved a source of increasing annoyance and burden to the people for many years prior to the Revolution. Quakers were punished in the pillory "for wearing hats in church"; juries of matrons were appointed "to fumble over the bodies of old women for 'witch marks'"; under the law heretics could be burned; denial of the doctrine of the Trinity was legally punishable by three years' imprisonment; Unitarians could be deprived of the custody of their children; the Establishment became unwilling to allow any religious services except its own; nonconformists were forced to contribute to the support of a religion which they did not profess; and arrest and imprisonment of dissenters became prevalent just before the Revolution. Moreover, the development of a spiritual tyranny bred among the people a keen sense of injustice, and many of them came to hate the Establishment.

In North Carolina the Established Church was less powerful than in Virginia, although its establishment was provided for in the early charters of the colony. Religious toleration was nevertheless guaranteed, and this provision attracted numerous settlers. The great majority of the people were dissenters, and there grew up a widespread and popular unwillingness among them to be taxed to support a religion not their own. In the main the same was true of South Carolina, though the Establishment was more strongly intrenched there. Even in that colony, however, the injustice of taxing the majority of the people to support the religion of the minority created dissatisfaction and caused various religious questions to become involved in many political struggles.

With the dawn of the Revolution and the national period measures were adopted which severed the Church from the State. In Virginia this separation formed a part of the reform program of Jefferson and his collaborators which was set in motion soon after independence was gained. The bill of rights of the Constitution of 1776 declared that "all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience," but beyond this that instrument contained no religious provisions. In

1777 Jefferson prepared a bill establishing religious freedom, but it was not reported to the Assembly until 1779 and was not enacted into law until 1785. The act was so comprehensive, however, as to deserve a place among "the great charters of human liberty."

In North Carolina the Establishment "died of inanition." The Vestry Act of 1768 was the last legislative attempt to perpetuate an endowed church in the colony at the expense of other religious denominations, and with the constitution of 1776 the divorce of the Church from the State became complete. The Establishment gradually weakened in South Carolina also, which, under the constitution of 1778, freely tolerated all persons and religious denominations "who acknowledge that there is one God and a future State of reward and punishment, and that God is publicly to be worshiped," and guaranteed equal religious and civil privileges to all Protestant denominations. The constitution of Georgia in 1777 conceded full religious freedom to all persons, "provided it be not repugnant to the peace and safety of the State."

Before the enactment of these measures to sever the Church from the State, however, frequent religious dissensions had served to delay coöperation in education. Moreover, the need for schools did not appear to be keenly felt by those in authority. The clergy, often described as a "picturesque" class in colonial times, had constituted in large measure the only class which professed learning; and many of the colonial schoolmasters had been the missionaries, ministers, or lay readers of the Church. Many of the clergy no doubt had influence as representatives of a great and powerful institution; but their picturesqueness was often due more to their manifold shortcomings and vices than to their virtues or the extent of their good works. Furthermore, the reproduction in some of the colonies of the tyrannical Schism Act of 1714, which required the license of the Bishop of London as a qualification for giving instruction in any form, hindered educational development by making it difficult for dissenters to provide educational facilities for their own children.

With agriculture as the mainstay of the Southern colonists and with the large plantations in great measure self-sustaining communities, the planters soon became economically independent. The reciprocity of needs and services, so essential to the development of community enterprises, was not widely known. With the industrial system of the South resting on the institution of slavery, political power was for the most part in the hands of the planters, sharp social distinctions were inevitable, and the South naturally became aristocratic. This condition tended to retard the growth of a strong middle class, with which free public-school systems always originate. Moreover, the Establishment, through its methods, its claims, and its arrogance, and the ecclesiastical evils which followed it, delayed the growth of a pure religious liberty, as that principle has become embedded in the American mind, and delayed also the appearance of the proper conception of education as a vital community interest.

In spite of the ecclesiastical evils of the time educational interests were at least indirectly promoted through the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, an auxiliary of the Established Church. This organization was one of the most prominent of the charitable and religious agencies at work among the Anglican colonies in the seventeenth century, and through it better-trained ministers were supplied, churches were established and revived, and provision was made for training children in the doctrines of the Church. In all the English colonies in the South except Virginia the Society established missions, libraries, and schools and supported school-teachers, but its work was most extensive in South Carolina, where it began in 1705.

The purpose of all the schools set up by this agency was essentially moral and religious. The curriculum showed a distinctly religious character, and the instructions to the schoolmasters were injunctions to piety and holy living. Primers, hornbooks, A B C books, and spellers were used for the beginners, but the more advanced children studied the church catechism, the Psalter, the Book of Common Prayer, the Bible, and "The Whole Duty of



Man." The purpose of education under the Society was "not only to fit the young for the business of life, but to make them moral and religious beings." The children were taught "to believe and to live as Christians, to read truly and distinctly, to write a plain and legible hand in order to fit them for useful employments, with as much arithmetic as shall be necessary to the same purpose." The educational work of the Society probably furnished the nearest approach to public-school organization found in the South before the Revolution.

The Society also established libraries in the colonies. Many of these were set up through the immediate influence of Thomas Bray, founder and one of the leaders of the organization and later the Bishop of London's commissary in Maryland. He came to America at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and the establishment of parish or public libraries soon became a part of his larger scheme of educational and religious activity. The colonial legislatures coöperated in this work and sought to encourage it. As early as 1700 the Assembly of South Carolina passed an act for securing and preserving a library at Charleston, which is said to have been the first public library established in America. It originally contained more than two hundred volumes, which were largely of a religious character, and two years later further additions were made to it. The only library which Dr. Bray gave to North Carolina was established at Bath, where it seems to have been properly cared for and used. In 1715 the Assembly passed the only act which looked to the encouragement of learning during the proprietary period and which concerned the preservation of this library. The act was very similar to the earlier one passed in South Carolina.

These and other evidences of educational interest and culture in the Southern colonies were in part stimulated in the manner just described. Through these agencies the charity-school idea prevailed very widely, and charity schools of the Church became somewhat numerous in the South before the close of the colonial period. In many cases also there was a remarkable eagerness

among the colonists to extend to their children and those of their neighbors opportunities to acquire some kind of an education, however meager it might be. Evidence of that desire may be seen in the last wills and testaments of the period and in the numerous endowments or foundations for schools. Even here, however, may be seen the element of charity or philanthropy which was inherited from England and encouraged by the work of the Church through its missionary and charitable agencies in the colonies—a work which stimulated the benevolence of public-spirited persons.

The wills of the period not only show an early interest in education but serve as evidence that various educational facilities were in existence, through the tutorial system or private schools. As early as 1640 John Waltham, of Accomac County, Virginia, directed that his son should be placed, at the age of six years, under the instruction of a "good and godlye schoolmaster" and remain under his teacher's guidance until he reached the age of eighteen. The expenses of this instruction were to be provided from the income of the property inherited by the boy. Nicholas Granger, of the same county, provided for the education of his daughter in the same manner. Similar provisions were made in the Carolinas and in Georgia. In some cases money was set aside by the direction of wills for the education of relatives; sometimes the proceeds of the labor of slaves were stipulated as means of furnishing educational facilities; often the property set aside for definite educational purposes was cattle, and sometimes it was tobacco or other produce.

Endowments or foundations for the support of charity or free schools were likewise numerous. The English origin and antecedents of the representative Southern colonists explain attempts to provide schools by this means. As a partial remedy for the wretched conditions of the working classes, there sprang up in England numerous charity schools intended in the main for the children of the poor. Many of them were endowed, while some of them were supported by private donations. Many of the colonists were acquainted with this educational custom, which had

a natural growth in America, where it furnished more or less extensive means of acquiring an elementary education.

The earliest example of this type of school is found in Virginia in 1619-1620, when the sum of £550 was given to the treasurer of the London Company for the purpose of erecting a school for furnishing instruction to a "convenient number" of Indian youth, who were to be early taught reading and the Christian doctrines and later some useful handicraft. Another attempt was made about the same time for the purpose of founding a school for the white children of Virginia; it was to be called the East India School. Plans were made for opening both of these schools, but they were interrupted by the Indian massacre of 1622 and were never established.

The plans were influential in establishing other schools, however, which are now known in American educational history as the Symms School and the Eaton School. By the will of Benjamin Symms, which was dated February, 1634-1635, valuable property was set apart to establish a free school in Elizabeth City County, Virginia, for the purpose of furnishing the means of free education to the children of that county. Eight years later the Assembly enacted legislation to carry out the plans of the benefactor, and the act showed "the high appreciation of education prevailing in Virginia in these early times, and the gratitude felt for every benefaction looking to its advancement." This bequest preceded John Harvard's famous gift for the institution which bears his name; and the school founded on the Symms endowment has been called "the earliest foundation for free education made in English America by a citizen of an English colony." The example of Symms was soon followed by Thomas Eaton, a physician of the same county, who gave five hundred acres of land and other property as a foundation of a free school similar to the one established by Symms. Both schools had long and useful careers as separate institutions and provided educational facilities for a large number of children. In 1805 they were combined and incorporated as Hampden Academy. In 1852 the fund from these endowments amounted to

\$10,000, and it is still preserved separate from the school fund of the State. It is probable that these schools became models for other communities in Virginia and that other schools of a similar character were founded there during colonial times.

Examples of endowments for educational purposes, of a somewhat later period, are found in North Carolina. In 1744 James Winwright, of Carteret County, left by his will certain valuable property in Beaufort and fifty pounds sterling for the support of a school in that town. Provision was made for a schoolhouse and for the teacher's residence; but the master was not obliged to take under his care any pupils "imposed on him" by the trustees who were provided for in the will, but he was to be free to teach such and as many as he thought convenient and to receive such compensation for his teaching "as he and the persons tendering them shall agree." Ten years later James Innes, of New Hanover County, bequeathed a plantation, some slaves, horses, and cattle, some books, and £100 sterling for the use of a free school "for the benefit of the youth of North Carolina." A school was finally chartered in Wilmington on this foundation.

Similar educational interest appeared in South Carolina, although only slight mention is made of it before 1710. In that year the Assembly passed an act "founding and erecting a free school for the use of the inhabitants of South Carolina," the preamble of which stated that "several charitable and well disposed Christians, by their last wills and testaments, have given several sums of money for the founding of a free school, but no person as yet is authorized to take the charge and care of erecting a free school, according to the intent of the donors." The act named the trustees and empowered them to select a site and to build a schoolhouse and dwelling houses "and buildings for the accommodation of the several masters and teachers." Provision was also made for a master, who was required to show ability to teach Greek and Latin and "the useful parts of mathematics." Other legacies were given for the purpose of providing for the education of poor children. Among these endowments were those of



Dave Williams, for a school in Charleston; John Whitmarsh, for a school in St. Paul's Parish; James Child, for a free school and master's residence in St. John's Parish; and Richard Ludlam, for a school for poor children in St. James's Parish. The primary object of the Ludlam bounty was to instruct children in the Christian doctrines and "such other things as are suitable to their capacity." For nearly a century this endowment supported four schools, and as late as the Civil War it amounted to quite a substantial sum.

Perhaps the most interesting and valuable bequest for education in South Carolina during the colonial period was that of Richard Beresford, who left a large sum in 1722 for educating poor children in St. Thomas's Parish. The school set up on this foundation continued to render a creditable service until the Revolution, which interrupted the work of the school and caused a loss of a part of the fund. The institution began in 1783, however, and continued until 1861, when the Civil War broke into its operation. The school was later reopened and had a healthy life until near the close of the nineteenth century. Up to that time the fund had been carefully managed and had gradually increased.

These were examples of individual philanthropy in behalf of education in colonial South Carolina. Certain societies were also interested in providing and promoting educational facilities in that colony. The most novel of these was the Winyaw Indigo Society, which was founded about 1740 for the purpose of improving the cultivation of indigo, one of the principal staples of the time. The society was formed largely as a "convivial club" by certain planters who met in Georgetown on the first Friday in each month for the purpose of discussing the latest London news, "to hold high discourse over the growth and prosperity of the indigo plant, and to refresh the inner man, and so to keep up to a proper standard the endearing ties of social life by imbibing freely of the inevitable bowl of punch." The manner in which the members of the society became interested in education is worth noting:

From the initiation fees and annual contributions it came to pass that about the year 1753 the exchequer became plethoric of gold, and the hearts of our founders overflowed with the milk of human kindness. . . . And hence it became the question of the hour, to what good purpose shall we devote our surplus funds? As the tale runs, the discussion was brief, pertinent, and solid. At the close of it the presiding officer called on the members to fill their glasses; he wished to close the debate by a definite proposition; if it met their approbation, each member would signify it by emptying his glass. He said: "There may be intellectual food which the present state of society is not fit to partake of; to lay such before it would be as absurd as to give a quadrant to an Indian; but knowledge is indeed as necessary as light, and ought to be as common as water and as free as air. It has been wisely ordered that light should have no color, water no taste, and air no odor; so indeed, knowledge should be equally pure and without admixture of creed or cant. I move, therefore, that the surplus funds in the treasury be devoted to the establishment of an independent charity school for the poor." The meeting rose to its feet. The glasses were each turned down without soiling the linen, and the Winyaw Indigo Society was established. Such, in brief, was the origin of a society whose school has been the school for all the country lying between Charleston and the North Carolina line for more than one hundred years. In its infancy it supplied the place of primary school, high school, grammar school, and collegiate institute. The rich and the poor alike drank from this fountain of knowledge, and the farmer, the planter, the mechanic, the artisan, the general of armies, lawyers, doctors, priests, senators, and governors of States, have each looked back to the Winyaw Indigo Society as the grand source of their success or other distinction. To many it was the only source of education. Here they began, here they ended that disciplinary course which was their only preparation for the stern conflicts of life.<sup>1</sup>

From 1756 until 1861 the school founded by this society had a very successful career, and twenty-five or more children were annually educated in it. The annual dues of the members of the Society, private benefactions, and the proceeds of escheated lands greatly increased the available income, and many poor

<sup>1</sup>From the Rules of the Winyaw Indigo Society, Charleston, 1874. See also Meriwether, *The History of Higher Education in South Carolina*.

children were maintained as well as educated. The trustees allowed the principal to receive a certain number of pay scholars in addition to the pupils for whom the school was originally designed, and for teaching these he was allowed an extra salary of \$600 in addition to his annual salary of \$1000. The school became well known and was patronized by the people of a large area of country, but the Civil War practically destroyed the value of the invested funds, and the school building was occupied for over a year by the Federal troops.

During this time its library was scattered and some of the books were never recovered. When the organization was allowed possession of the building again funds were raised as a beginning of a new endowment. A part of this was used for making repairs on the building, and the balance was expended for deficiencies in teachers' salaries. But the work of the school continued from 1866 to 1886, during which time it educated ten poor children annually. At the latter date it was incorporated as one of the public graded schools of the State, but the Society continued its educational work for many years after 1886. About 1892 or 1893, however, "it relinquished control of the graded school system, which it had previously held under a special statute, and gave the use of its building to the school trustees, free of rent. This arrangement lasted for a few years, when the school district erected a building of its own. Since that time the Society has done no educational work, but still retains its existence and organization."<sup>1</sup>

Other societies in South Carolina fostered education as a part of a general plan of charity during the colonial period. One of the oldest and the most prominent of these was the South Carolina Society of Charleston. This was organized in 1737 as the "French Club" by a group of French Protestants who met weekly for mutual advantage. Later the members agreed upon a weekly contribution as a fund to be used to relieve the distress of any of

<sup>1</sup>From a statement made by Walter Hazard, Esq., of Georgetown, South Carolina, in a letter to the author, November 11, 1916.

their number, and the organization became known as the "Two-bit Club." In 1751 it was incorporated as the South Carolina Society and existed as a semieducational corporation for almost a century. Teachers were employed and poor children of both sexes were educated and, in some cases, maintained. No children under eight years of age were admitted and none were retained beyond the age of fourteen, the girls not beyond twelve. When children were dismissed their places were immediately filled by the admission of others. With the rise of the public-school system in Charleston, after 1880, the educational feature of the Society was discontinued, and its funds were devoted entirely to the support of the families of its members. At that time it had a substantial endowment and owned creditable buildings.

The idea of charitable education was more or less natural in colonial Georgia also, because of the philanthropic motives of its organization. This settlement was made in 1732 under the direction of James Oglethorpe, a "gentleman of unblemished character, brave, generous, and humane." He was chairman of a committee in the English House of Commons appointed to visit the prisons and to examine penal conditions and to suggest reforms. As a result of the investigation, which revealed gross injustice and mismanagement, but also through his public spirit and charitable design, there began a movement to alleviate the "miserable national grievance" and to purify prison management. While Oglethorpe was engaged in this investigation the idea of an American colony occurred to him as a means of affording opportunity to the honestly unfortunate to retrieve their fortunes and to begin new lives. The colony of Georgia was the result of the benevolent plan.

The earliest educational effort in that colony was in the form of mission schools, which were established by the Moravians for the purpose of furnishing religious instruction to the Indians. These schools had only a short life, however, and came to an end in 1738, when the Moravian settlement moved to Pennsylvania. But when the original towns of the colony were laid out large



tracts of land were set apart by the trustees for church and school support. Schools were maintained by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, by the trustees, and by charitable friends of the colony. These were found in Savannah and in other places. In 1754 Georgia became a royal province, and an agreement was made by which the crown promised to continue the "allowance heretofore usually given by the trustees to a minister and two schoolmasters." This agreement was maintained until the Revolution and is "the only case on record where the Parliament of England supported schools in the colonies."

The most notable example of educational effort in Georgia before it acquired statehood, however, was the work of the Bethesda Orphan House, which was established by George Whitefield and James Habersham in 1739. The idea of the institution was suggested to Whitefield by Charles Wesley, who convinced the evangelist of the need of such a school, the plan of which seems to have been an imitation of Francke's remarkable educational and charitable institution in Halle. Whitefield secured a large tract of land from the trustees of the colony and then began preaching and soliciting funds for the erection of buildings. His efforts were very successful and he was soon able to open the school.<sup>1</sup>

Much interest centered in the institution, which soon became very useful in the maintenance and education of orphans and poor children, who were taught such trades as carpentering, weaving, and tailoring, as well as the elements of a literary education. In 1764 Whitefield sought to convert the institution into "a seminary of literature and academical learning," and for that purpose memorialized the provincial authorities. They approved the plan, and Whitefield went to England to secure the charter from the crown, but his petition was refused. He then hoped to convert Bethesda into an academy similar in plan to Franklin's at Philadelphia, but this plan failed also, and he died in 1770

<sup>1</sup>The reader will probably recall, from the "Autobiography," the amusing story of Whitefield's success in inducing Benjamin Franklin to empty his pockets to aid the Bethesda Orphan House.

without ever fully realizing the favorite ambition of his life. Shortly afterwards the Orphan House was burned, and although it was rebuilt and work in it resumed, its active work soon ceased. In 1791 the estate passed into the hands of trustees, and in 1808 it was sold and settled by legislative authority and the proceeds were distributed to certain charitable institutions in Savannah. A part was given to the Savannah Poorhouse and Hospital Society, a part to the Union Society of Savannah, and a part to increase the funds of Chatham Academy on condition that it would support and educate five orphan children free of charge.

There is some evidence of educational interest on the part of the colonial assemblies, though the encouragement of schools by legislative assistance was not so great as could have been desired. In 1619 and in 1624 the London Company encouraged efforts in Virginia to establish institutions of learning, but both efforts ended in failure. In 1660 the Assembly passed acts which looked to founding an educational institution, and the governor and council headed the list of subscriptions of funds for its support. The plan failed, however, and it was not until 1692 that efforts to secure a college in the colony were rewarded. In that year William and Mary College was founded by royal charter, and gifts of lands and money were made and the rights of certain colonial taxes allowed for its support. Donations were also made by planters, and considerable support came from the Assembly, which gave the college liberal assistance and protection throughout the colonial period. The institution soon became the center of learning for the colony and has had an almost unbroken career of educational success and usefulness. Other acts of educational legislation in colonial Virginia dealt in the main with the practice of apprenticing orphans and poor children, which prevailed in the other colonies as well.

In North Carolina the first legislative action in behalf of education was to secure the provincial library mentioned above. As in Virginia, legislation was also enacted in behalf of the poor,

and occasionally there was passed an act of more direct educational importance. Gabriel Johnston became the royal governor of North Carolina in 1734, and during the eighteen years which he served in that position he showed unusual interest in schools and education. In 1736 he made a notable appeal to the Assembly on this subject, and that body responded with some sympathy, but nothing was done until 1745. In that year an act was passed to build a schoolhouse in Edenton. There is no evidence, however, that the house was ever built. Other attempts were made from this time until the Revolution. In 1762 the Reverend James Reed preached a sermon before the Assembly on the importance of education, which was printed and distributed at public expense. This was perhaps the first public expenditure for education ever made in North Carolina. In 1766 provision was made for establishing a school in New Bern, and with the revenue from an import duty on all rum and other liquors brought into the Neuse River for seven years ten poor children were to be educated in it. This was the first school incorporated by the Assembly in North Carolina and likewise the first educational law of any importance passed in the colony. In 1767 and 1768 efforts were made to establish a school in Edenton, but attempted legislation on the subject failed temporarily when the Assembly opposed the enforcement of the Schism Act. In 1771, as a result of interest in the establishment of a "public seminary for the education of youth" in the western part of the colony, a charter was granted to Queen's Museum, or Queen's College, but the charter was later twice repealed by the king and council on account of the Schism Act. The school seemed to flourish without a charter, however, until 1775, when the name was changed to Liberty Hall Academy, and two years later it received a charter from the State.

Besides the legislation to secure the provincial library established in Charleston in 1700 and acts concerning the poor, a few other educational acts were passed in South Carolina during the colonial period. Among these was an act empowering the justices

of the county and precinct courts to purchase lands and erect free schools in each county or precinct and to assess the expenses of such schools upon the lands and slaves of each jurisdiction. Masters "well skilled in the Latin tongue" were to be appointed and were to receive an annual salary of £25. Ten poor children were to be taught free of charge in each school, provided they were sent by the justices. This law was passed largely through the interest of Governor Francis Nicholson, who was very eager to provide educational facilities for the colony. Later, in response to a petition from several citizens in St. George's Parish, an act authorized the establishment of a free school at Dorchester. This act has considerable historical interest, in that it provided for the education of the children of that place because "their parents are so well inclined to have them instructed in grammar and other liberal arts and sciences, and other useful learning" and because they were unable to send their children to the free school at Charleston.

In addition to the educational agencies already noted, other evidences of colonial culture appeared in the libraries of the period and in the importance attached to books. Many of the colonists brought books and libraries with them, and interest in collections extended very widely. Valuable collections were built up in Virginia in the seventeenth century. The wills of the time often contained special bequests of books; and inventories showed libraries and books to have a prominent place in the esteem of carpenters, blacksmiths, mechanics, and other laborers, as well as of the more prosperous colonists.

Similar interest was in evidence in South Carolina during the early colonial period. The South Carolina Library Society had a wide influence and a long life of usefulness, and throughout the larger part of the eighteenth century libraries were formed "at many of the court houses, as central places of deposit for the districts," and enlarged and extended a taste for literature and reading. Many of the planters had respectable libraries, and the booksellers of the period spoke of the sale of books as



"progressively increasing." Schoolbooks and volumes that "treat of religion" appeared to be the greatest in demand.

In North Carolina libraries afforded opportunity for cultivating a taste for books and reading and for fostering an educational sentiment. Among the most notable private libraries were the collections of Edward Moseley and of Samuel Johnston, who for many years were leading figures in the colony. Moseley's collection at Edenton numbered four hundred volumes, many of which were folios and bound in sheep. Johnston's library consisted of nearly five hundred volumes of history and politics, biography, travels, philosophy, essays, and miscellaneous literature, encyclopedias, grammars, poetry, and drama. In the eastern part of the colony there were many other more or less important collections; and in the western section, where many Scotch and Scotch-Irish emigrated after 1746, a great many private libraries were built up. This evidence of educational interest began to appear in Georgia also prior to the Revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Although the colonists in the South had a rather wide interest in many cultural and educational agencies, conditions did not promote the early establishment of printing presses and newspapers in that region. Printing presses were set up and newspapers founded earlier in New England, for example, very largely because of the different conditions of settlement and of government, and other influences which promoted educational facilities generally in that section. It may be helpful to note here the dates of the establishment of the press and of the earliest newspapers in the various colonies.

The printing press was permanently set up in Massachusetts in 1638; Pennsylvania in 1686; New York in 1693; Connecticut in 1709; Maryland in 1726; South Carolina in 1730; Rhode Island in 1732; Virginia in 1733; North Carolina in 1749; New Jersey in 1751; New Hampshire in 1756; Delaware in 1761; Georgia in 1762. There is evidence that there was a press

<sup>1</sup>Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina.

in Virginia as early as 1681, but it seems to have been speedily prohibited, and a permanent press was not established in that colony until 1733. The earliest newspapers in the colonies appeared as follows: the *Boston News Letter*, at Boston, in 1704; the *American Weekly Mercury*, at Philadelphia, in 1719; the *New York Gazette*, at New York, in 1725; the *Maryland Gazette*, at Annapolis, in 1727; the *Rhode Island Gazette*, at Newport, in 1732; the *South Carolina Gazette*, at Charleston, in 1732; the *Virginia Gazette*, at Williamsburg, in 1736; the *Connecticut Gazette*, at New Haven, in 1755; the *North Carolina Gazette*, at New Bern, in 1755; the *New Hampshire Gazette*, at Portsmouth, in 1756; the *Wilmington Courant*, at Wilmington, Delaware, in 1762; the *Georgia Gazette*, at Savannah, in 1763; and the *New Jersey Gazette*, at Burlington, in 1777.<sup>1</sup>

It will be seen from this general statement that education in the South during colonial days was by no means neglected by the colonists themselves, although governmental provision for schools was not extensive. Schools were not yet regarded, however, as a function of the State. The Southern colonies thus officially reflected that indifference to the education of the masses which prevailed in England during that time. Practically the only interest of the government in education appeared in the policy of apprenticing or binding out orphans and poor children under colonial legislation which was inherited from England, and the training of such children in trades, handicrafts, or agricultural occupations. It should be kept in mind, however, that opportunities for education in colonial times were larger than is commonly known. In addition to the charity schools and the endowed free schools already mentioned, other means were provided by which the various classes of the colonists could receive educational training. Chief among these were the tutorial system, education in Europe, the community or "old field schools,"

<sup>1</sup> See Thomas, *The History of Printing in America* (Vol. I, pp. 330-352; Vol. II, pp. 163-174), and Weeks, *The Press of North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century*.

and (for the less prosperous part of society especially) the poor laws and the apprenticeship system, which is treated in another chapter.

Private tutors in the homes of the planters furnished a highly satisfactory and a more or less effective means of supplying educational facilities for the more prosperous of the colonists in Virginia and South Carolina and, to some extent, in North Carolina and Georgia. This custom was directly inherited from England, where it had developed before the colonization of America. It was especially suited to the plantation system of the South. The wealthy planters employed tutors for their children from among the candidates for orders in the Church, who were often educated and cultured. Frequently, in Virginia at least, the tutors came from the indentured servant class, which included many cultivated Scotchmen who had thus sought to escape the unwholesome conditions at home. Education in England or on the Continent was likewise a popular educational practice among the wealthy colonists in spite of its inconvenience and obstacles. This was a practice among Virginians even in the seventeenth century, and later it was more or less extensive in the other Southern colonies also.

Previous to 1775 there were numerous ministers of the Church of England in South Carolina, many of whom engaged as tutors in addition to their clerical duties. From 1733 to 1774 more than four hundred advertisements relating to schools and schoolmasters appeared in the *South Carolina Gazette*, which was published in Charleston; and it appears that during these years several hundred persons, in addition to the ministers, were engaged in the colony as tutors, schoolmasters, and schoolmistresses. Similar advertisements appeared in newspapers in Virginia and North Carolina and to a less extent in Georgia during the colonial period.

During these years and even later many children were educated in community schools, or what later came to be called "old field schools." These were set up at convenient points by the people of the various neighborhoods as private or community

enterprises. Now and then a community or old field school was probably conducted at the teacher's residence, but most frequently they were found in some neglected or abandoned old field, from which they acquired their name. In many cases, no doubt, some of these schools grew into rather pretentious institutions and were often called academies.<sup>1</sup> The course of study usually consisted of reading, writing, and arithmetic, though occasionally advanced subjects were taught. Many of the early teachers were the local clergymen or lay readers of the Church, who thus sought to supplement their salaries by the tuition fees which were charged for instruction. The earlier teachers were generally required to hold licenses, either from the Bishop of London or by authority of the governor of the colony, and the more or less strict adherence to this rule doubtless somewhat decreased educational opportunities for the earlier dissenters.

But educational facilities were not so extensive in the South as in the North, and the reasons are not difficult to find. In the North the climate was rigorous and the winters very severe, the Indians were hostile, and the colonists were naturally forced into compact communities, or towns, which were organized almost simultaneously with the early settlements. The people were compelled to unite and to coöperate for purposes of common defense and community welfare. Moreover, the Northern colonies enjoyed a political and religious freedom which the Southern colonies were denied by the proprietary or royal authorities. And in the South the climate was mild, the soil was fertile, the Indians were comparatively friendly, and there was no necessity for the organization of compact groups or communities. The colonists, therefore, naturally tended toward scattered settlements, and for the most part individual families took up large plantations which to a very great extent soon became independent social units. The principle of reciprocal obligations and of community coöperation through exchange of needs and services did not promptly establish itself.

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IV.



This fact helps measurably to explain the South's apparently slow response to the advance educational movement which had an earlier and fuller influence in other sections of the country. The South has always been rural and is yet essentially an agricultural region. It still has comparatively few large cities. And it has been in such centers that the principle of coöperation has always been most intelligently applied in the solution of common questions and in the promotion of common interests. In such compact communities the people early learned to coöperate in a manner not yet fully understood by the rural and sparsely settled sections, of which the South has always been so largely composed. For this reason rural education has been and is yet the most insistent and immediately urgent task before the people of that region.

Quite a few of the teachers in the early schools of the South were earnest men of creditable training, though most of them were doubtless indifferently prepared for their work. In the main they were itinerant and migratory. Those who taught in the schools of the Established Church were licensed by some governing authority, usually the Bishop of London or the colonial governors. The private teachers knew nothing of a license or a certificate to teach. The schoolhouses were primitive and often built of logs. They were furnished with crude benches and had no equipment such as the modern school has. Methods of teaching were poor and wasteful, and group instruction was practically unknown. Discipline was harsh, and the teacher was considered a hard and severe taskmaster. Hearing lessons and keeping order consumed all his time. There was nothing attractive about the colonial school in the South.

The curriculum was meager, and textbooks were few. The books were printed in England and were mainly religious and moral in purpose; few secular textbooks were in use in the colonies before the beginning of the national period. Hornbooks, primers, the Psalter, the Bible, and the Catechism were the texts commonly found in the charity schools and the Church schools. These were used primarily as reading books and as means of giving religious instruction. The celebrated "New England Primer,"

which was so widely used in other sections, found a place in the South also and maintained it for a number of years. In addition to reading, the subjects of writing and elementary arithmetic and spelling were taught to some extent.

The educational theories and practices in the Southern colonies are to be largely explained, therefore, just as our present-day theories and practices, by the dominating social, political, and economic conditions of the period. For these are primarily the factors which promote or retard the growth of educational effort. What, then, were the conditions which delayed the acceptance of the theory that education is a normal function of the government? Why was there failure to unite early on a plan for organizing, supporting, and directing systems of schools in which all children could be educated together successfully and without prejudice? What problems of those early times have persisted until the present?

The answers to these questions will be sought in the following chapters. For the present, however, the student should remember that there was a domination of religious and of aristocratic conceptions of education which quite naturally gave the color of charity to any educational effort of the government. This element of charity was destined to become a stubborn obstacle to future public educational development. In theory the ideals of political democracy began to appear early and were strongly revealing themselves by the beginning of the national period, but the aristocratic conceptions and practices in education, so strong and wide in colonial times, continued to prevail until very recently as inheritances from the past.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. What conditions were most influential in determining educational practices in the South before the Revolutionary War?
2. What were the obstacles in the way of a healthy development of public education in the Southern colonies?
3. Study the attitude of England toward colonial education.

4. Compare educational theory and practice in the South and in the other colonies and explain the differences that appear.
5. Compare education in colonial times and now in regard to aim, curriculum, methods of teaching, textbooks, school equipment, preparation of teachers, and the licensing or certification of teachers.
6. Show how the Established Church aided education in the South in the colonial period. In what way did it serve as a retarding influence?
7. Explain the domination of the aristocratic conception of education which prevailed in the South.
8. Explain the fact that the colonial assemblies or legislatures gave only slight attention to education.
9. Why were charity schools, or schools in which poor children were taught, a popular form of educational effort in the South?
10. Show how the social system of the South tended to delay the growth of community coöperation in schools.
11. Discuss the various evidences of culture in the South during the colonial period.
12. Make a study of (a) private libraries, (b) public libraries, (c) newspapers, (d) booksellers, in the South before 1775.
13. Make a study of peculiar school practices in the Southern colonies before the Revolutionary War.
14. Note any problems or practices in present-day school work which have their origin in colonial conditions.
15. Why is rural education the most important single educational problem facing the South at this time?

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## CHAPTER III

### PUBLIC EDUCATION OF DEPENDENTS: THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. Although public education of every kind is now recognized as the obligation of the State, the principle of universal education has only slowly gained practical application. The difference between this principle and the application of it is illustrated by the early apprenticeship laws and practices.

2. The apprenticeship system sought to provide a certain training for poor and dependent children. It was inherited from England and became general in the South during the colonial period and even later.

3. The principal features of the English law and practice were included in colonial legislation in the South.

4. The early apprenticeship laws in Virginia were based directly on the well-known English law of 1601. Later, legislation on the subject was elaborated and improved in Virginia, and by the Revolution the duties were transferred from the Church to the State. The principal features of the colonial legislation were retained throughout the nineteenth century and to recent times.

5. Legislation and practices in Virginia were copied in the colony of North Carolina, the educational features being practically the same and remaining substantially unchanged until the present.

6. Similar legislation was enacted in South Carolina, in Georgia, in Tennessee, in Louisiana, in Mississippi, in Alabama, in Arkansas, in Florida, and in Texas, and, with occasional slight revisions, have remained practically the same as originally formed.

7. The principal features of the system as found in the South and the agencies for its administration had educational significance.

8. The purposes of the system, its lessons for present-day problems of delinquency and dependency, and the relation to modern public-welfare work have value for students and teachers today.

9. The educational significance of the problem of neglected children may be seen in the duties of the school and the teacher in advancing the principle of educational opportunity for all.

Public education of every kind, whether elementary, secondary, higher, vocational, recreational, or corrective in character, is now well-nigh universally accepted as the obligation of the State. That it is the function of the State to provide opportunities for the adequate and safe education and training of all her citizens for useful, successful, and self-respecting activities is likewise accepted. For education is now regarded as the principal means of promoting public well-being, and these two principles are therefore fundamental to the welfare of democratic society; but although somewhat early accepted in theory, it is surprising to find that their practical application has always been slow and that the difficulties in the way of their extension to new conditions and new problems are even now numerous and stubborn, just as in earlier times.

This wide difference between a principle of social growth and the practical application of it in community coöperation finds a somewhat striking illustration in the early effort of the governing bodies to control and care for the poor and dependent children in the Southern colonies. That effort found expression in the laws dealing with apprenticeship and in the practices prevailing under them. Such legislation was early enacted in response to the needs and desires of the communities or colonies and under the influence of traditional or inherited ideals of the colonists. Theoretically, or in principle, the laws and practices were humanitarian, religious or philanthropic, moral or educational, economic, industrial, or vocational in purpose. Perhaps in actual practice the economic aspect of the apprenticeship system was strongest in its influence. For while it appears that the colonies were eager to afford some educational opportunity for the poor and dependent children, a study of the actual practices built up on the theories and laws of apprenticeship shows that those in authority were perhaps more nearly interested in the industrial or economic features of the system than in the educational advantages which it showed promise of offering. On the other hand, however, the apprenticeship system served to aid a

large number of dependent children in colonial times and to stimulate a wholesome attitude toward those who otherwise lacked opportunities for being brought up properly. Moreover, in that early attitude toward the poor and dependent is to be found a basis for the full extension of the principle of universal education, now viewed as so fundamental in American life. For although it is a long way from the early apprenticeship laws to present-day legislation for delinquent and neglected children, there appear to be direct relations between the former and the latter means for the promotion of the common good. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to point out the essential features of the old apprenticeship system and to note its educational significance for those present-day laws and practices which look to intelligent public assistance, through rational, properly organized, and directed plans, for promoting the general welfare of the State.

On account of the peculiar social, political, and economic conditions mentioned in the preceding chapter, the principal means of providing educational facilities in the South during the colonial period were not to be public but private in character. Few if any organized public schools, as the term is known today, were in existence there at that time, and few of those children who received even the most rudimentary education received it in organized educational institutions. There were doubtless many schools, however, of one kind or another, of which there is no record and whose existence it would be difficult to prove. And there were other educational agencies than schools for supplying instruction. One of these was family instruction, or education in the home, and was found in those families that felt the need and the responsibility for training their own children. But this means of teaching naturally varied in quality and quantity. Another agency was that of the apprenticeship practices, which prevailed widely and for many years, for the purpose of providing a training for orphans, poor children, and children born out of wedlock. The adoption of this system showed that the colonists

felt the necessity of making provision for the education of such children and for their training in some trade, handicraft, or in agricultural occupations.

The apprenticeship system of training was common throughout the South and developed into a modified form of compulsory education during the early period. It was transplanted directly from England, where it had served useful purposes. As noted in Chapter I, the problem of the unemployed and of the poor in England in the sixteenth century came to be dealt with by a series of laws which undertook to provide a stricter punishment for sturdy beggars and to inaugurate a compulsory assessment to aid the deserving poor. It was also noted that legislation enacted near the close of that century made explicit and practicable the directions for controlling this condition by a systematic collection and distribution of funds for the relief of the poor and by setting the able-bodied vagrants to work. The principal features of that legislation were incorporated in the famous law of 1601, which became the real statutory foundation of the poor law and the basis of a national system of poor relief. Its influence on the practices of the English colonists was very significant. Under the authority of this act definite compulsory contributions were assessed on ratable values for funds to relieve the poor, and "overseers of the poor" were appointed to superintend the distribution of relief, to apprentice orphans and the children of the poor, and to see that trades were properly taught to them. The law of 1601 and similar acts were not primarily educational in intent, but they became the basis of the only vocational training given a large number of children. The early colonists knew the need and were trained in the interpretation and administration of such legislation, and the custom was quite naturally transplanted to America.

This system of training gained a unique and important place in education in the South. But in order to understand the popular attitude toward the class of people whom it was intended to provide for and to protect, it is necessary to consider that education



is a term of varying meaning. The term now generally means an expansion of the mental faculties through a specific organized course of a more or less literary nature. For the more prosperous part of society a "certain tincture of letters" has always been regarded as essential, but a broad formal literary training has not always been held as entirely necessary for the humbler classes. A popular and traditional view has been that an extensive literary education was not indispensable to the poor youth of the community. Moreover, the parents or guardians of such youth have often appeared more concerned about a practical training of their children or wards in those occupations and crafts through which they were later to maintain themselves than they were about mere "book learning." In the so-called apprenticeship system, therefore, a very important form of educational effort appeared in the South during the colonial period.

Under the famous English law of 1601, on which colonial practices were generally based, the churchwardens of every parish and a varying number of "substantial householders" thereof were nominated annually by the local justices of the peace as "overseers of the poor." These officers were required to give attention to setting to work all the poor children whose parents were unable to maintain them, and to raise by taxation materials and "competent sums of money" for apprenticing such children. The overseers were to meet monthly on Sunday afternoon "after divine service" to give attention to their duties, when they were to render account of all moneys and materials received by them and of "all things concerning their said office." Penalties were prescribed for every case of negligence or default on the part of the overseers, and imprisonment was the punishment for those who refused to account. Whenever the justices found the inhabitants of any parish unable to relieve their poor the officers were required to tax any other parishes in "the hundred where the said parish is." In case the hundred was regarded as unable to bear the tax, the justices at their quarter sessions were to rate and assess other parishes in the county for the purposes of the law. Persons

refusing to pay their assessments for poor relief saw their property sold for the rate required by the law.

Perhaps the most important duties of the churchwardens and overseers of the poor were to bind as apprentices the children affected by this act, the males until they were twenty-four years of age and the females until the age of twenty-one or the time of their marriage. But they were also required to have houses built on any waste or common in the parish, at the general charge of the parish, as habitations for the poor. Powers similar to those given to justices of the peace were also given to officers of towns and corporations. Justices in the county and officers in the towns who failed to nominate regularly the overseers of the poor "shall lose and forfeit for every such default five pounds. . . ."

One of the first apprenticeship laws was enacted in Virginia in 1643. It was based on the English law of 1601 and had an interesting educational aspect:

Whereas there hath been the general suffering of the colony that the orphans of divers deceased persons have been very much abused and prejudiced in their estates by the negligence of overseers and guardians of such orphans; Be it therefore enacted and confirmed, . . . And all overseers and guardians of such orphans are enjoined by the authority aforesaid [county courts] to educate and instruct them according to their best endeavors in Christian religion and in rudiments of learning, and to provide for them necessities according to the competence of their estates.

Further legislation was enacted in Virginia in 1646 and showed that in spite of a difference in local conditions the legislation and practices of the mother country were transplanted to that colony:

Whereas sundry laws and statutes by act of Parliament established, have with great wisdom ordained, for the better education of youth in honest and profitable trades and manufactures, as also to avoid sloth and idleness wherewith such young children are easily corrupted, as also relief of such parents whose poverty extends not to give them breeding, that the justices of the peace should, at their discretion,

bind out children to tradesmen or husbandmen to be brought up in some good and lawful calling. And whereas God Almighty, among his many other blessings, hath vouchsafed increase of children to this colony, who now are multiplied to a considerable number, who if instructed in good and lawful trades, may much improve the honor and reputation of the country, and no less their own good and their parents comfort: But forasmuch as for the most part, the parents either through fond indulgence or perverse obstinacy, are most averse and unwilling to part with their children, Be it therefore enacted by authority of this Grand Assembly, according to the aforesaid laudable custom in the Kingdom of England, that the commissioners of the several counties respectively do, at their discretion, make choice of two children in each county at the age of eight or seven years at the least, either male or female, which are to be sent up to James City between this and June next to be employed in the public flax houses under such master and mistress as shall be there appointed in carding, knitting and spinning. And that the said children be furnished from the said county with six barrels of corn, two coverlets, or one rug and one blanket, one bed, one wooden bowl or tray, two pewter spoons, a sow shote of six months old, two laying hens, with convenient apparel both linen and woollen, with hose and shoes. And for the better provision of housing for the same children, it is enacted that there be two houses built by the first of April next of forty feet long apiece with good and substantial timber, the houses to be twenty foot broad apiece, eight foot high in the pitch and a stack of brick chimneys standing in the midst of each house, and that they be lofted with sawn boards and made with convenient partitions. And it is further thought fit that the commissioners have caution not to take up any children but from such parents who by reason of their poverty are disabled to maintain and educate them. Be it likewise agreed that the Governor hath agreed with the Assembly for the sum of 10,000 lbs. of tobacco to be paid him the next crop, to build and finish the said house in manner and form before expressed.

Just how extensively or effectively this law was executed the accessible documents do not indicate, but it remained the legislation dealing with the control of the poor until 1672. In that year the justices were ordered to put the laws of England against vagrant and idle persons in strict execution; and the county courts were

empowered and authorized to apprentice to tradesmen all children whose parents were unable to bring them up properly, the males until they were twenty-one years old and the females until they were eighteen. The churchwardens were strictly enjoined to render annually to the orphans' court an account of all children in their parishes to whom the law applied.

The law dealing with poor children and providing for their bringing up was gradually elaborated in the colony of Virginia. By an act of 1705 it was provided that when the estate of any orphan was so small that no person would maintain him for the profits thereof, such orphan was to be apprenticed until he was twenty-one years of age, for the purpose of learning a trade. His master was "obliged to teach him to read and write; and at the expiration of this servitude, to pay and allow him in like manner as is appointed for servants, by indenture or custom." Here the relation between the apprenticeship system and formal education begins to reveal itself. To teach an orphan or poor child a trade or art was no longer considered the only duty the master legally owed his apprentice. Mere maintenance by the master was not sufficient; provision for formal literary instruction, however meager, was required, as may be seen in the language of the law, "obliged to teach him to read and write." A growing consciousness on the subject of education and training for the less fortunate children was appearing.

In 1727 it became lawful for the churchwardens, upon certificate from the court, to bind as apprentices the children of parents who were incapable of taking due care of their education and training in Christian principles. The children were to be apprenticed for such a term and under such covenants as were usual and customary or as the law directed in the case of orphan children. The paternalistic character of apprenticeship legislation, which formerly seems to have applied especially to poor orphans, now appeared in the laws dealing with the children of poor parents. The tendency was to regard such children as belonging to the governing authority and as being entitled, by reason of such



relationship, to the training and instruction necessary for maintaining themselves on reaching maturity. Supplementary legislation later required that all apprentices should faithfully serve their term of apprenticeship, because "the taking of apprentices, and bringing them up, and instructing them to be skilful in the trades, arts, mysteries, or occupations, to which they are bound, will be very beneficial to such apprentices, and increase the number of artificers in the colony." The economic importance of the apprenticeship system was, therefore, evident to the colonists.

In 1748 another act was passed on the subject which had considerable educational significance. Whenever the profits of an orphan's estate were insufficient to maintain him he was to be bound apprentice to some tradesman, merchant, mariner, or other person approved by the court until the age of twenty-one years. Under like conditions a girl was to be apprenticed to some suitable trade or employment until the age of eighteen. The master or mistress of such apprentice was to provide him or her "diet, clothes, lodgings, and accommodations fit and necessary," and was to teach or cause him or her to be taught "to read and write"; and at the expiration of the apprenticeship to pay such apprentice "the like allowance as is by law appointed for servants by indenture or custom."

The laws dealing with the poor were gradually elaborated and the duties and responsibilities of the churchwardens in making provisions for the poor were increased. By legislation of 1755 these officers were required to keep a register of all the poor in their parishes and to send certain poor people to the "poorhouses," which the vestries were empowered to build and to furnish with "cotton, hemp and flax or other necessary materials, implements or things, for setting the poor to work." Moreover, an allowance was to be levied in the regular parish levies for the education of the poor children placed in such houses until they were bound out according to law. This is another example of the direct transplanting to the colony of an English custom, and the similarity between this law and the law of 1601, described above, is at

once noticeable. In 1769 an act was passed by which children born out of wedlock were to be bound apprentices by the churchwardens, the boys until they were twenty-one and the girls until they reached the age of eighteen. And the master or mistress was required to teach such children, or cause them to be taught, to read and write.

By the Revolution the poor laws and the apprenticeship legislation had been built up sufficiently to take care of all poor orphans, children of poor parents, and illegitimate children. Under the general law such children were to be bound by authorized local bodies to a master or mistress, to serve a term of years, during which time they were to be maintained, trained in an art, industry, or trade, and taught to read and write. When the term of service ended the apprentice usually found a career open to him for which he had been trained. However great the obvious weaknesses of such a system, its value for a large part of the colonial population cannot be questioned.

By 1778 the duties and powers of dealing with the poor were beginning to be transferred from the churchwardens, vestries, or other church officers to state or county authorities. By this time the theory was gaining that caring for and educating and training poor children were functions of the State. Later the vestries and other parish bodies with powers of poor relief were dissolved in several counties of Virginia, and such parochial duties were transferred to five freeholders who were to be elected overseers of the poor to serve for three years. These civil officers were to be a corporate body and succeed to the powers and duties of the church officers who had been charged with poor relief and the direction of the apprenticeship system. A few years later this legislation was extended to other counties, and by 1785 all powers and authority previously given the churchwardens for apprenticing poor and dependent children were taken over by the overseers of the poor, who were required to make monthly reports to the county courts.

A provision of particular interest appeared in an act of 1786:

Be it further enacted, that the overseers of the poor in each district, shall monthly make returns to the court of their county, of the orphans in their district, and of such children within the same, whose parents they shall judge incapable of supporting and bringing them up in honest courses. And the said court is hereby authorized to direct the said overseers, or either of them, to bind out such poor orphans and children apprentices to such person or persons as the court shall approve of, until the age of twenty-one years, if a boy, or eighteen years, if a girl. The indentures of such apprentices shall contain proper covenants to oblige the person to whom they shall be bound, to teach them some art, trade, or business, to be particularized in the indentures, as also reading and writing, and, if a boy, common arithmetic, including the rule of three, and to pay to him or her, as the case may be, three pounds and ten shillings at the expiration of the time of service.

Near the close of the eighteenth century the legislation was revised and summarized and the apprenticeship system slightly improved. The essential features were retained; and throughout the nineteenth century these persisted in Virginia, as in practically all the States. By legislation of 1805 the indentures, as before, contained covenants to teach, "except in the case of black and mulatto orphans." The law on the subject in 1849 made it incumbent on the master to teach or have his apprentice taught a trade or occupation, whether it was expressly provided in the indenture or not, "and unless the apprentice be a free negro" the master was "bound to teach him reading, writing and common arithmetic, including the rule of three." This provision continued until the Civil War. Authority was also given for placing orphans and poor children in any incorporated association, asylum, or school instituted for the support and education of destitute children, and before the close of the century a definite form of agreement between the master and the court was specified by legislative enactment. With these exceptions legislation on the subject of the poor and apprentices in Virginia has continued, in its

essentials, practically unchanged from colonial practices, though the necessity for its enforcement has gradually decreased as other agencies have developed for caring for the dependent classes.

The legislation and practices in Virginia were copied in great detail in other Southern colonies throughout the period. This was especially true of North Carolina, which was in close contact with Virginia. The system was in operation in North Carolina, however, many years before apprenticeship legislation was enacted in that colony. Records of the latter part of the seventeenth century show that orphans and poor children were then being bound out and apprenticed by the precinct courts,<sup>1</sup> though legislation in that colony was not enacted on the subject until 1715. In that year a law was passed giving the precinct courts sole authority to bind out and apprentice such dependent children. The law required that "all Orphans shall be Educated & provided for according to their Rank & degree out of the Income or Interest of their Estate & Stock if the same will be sufficient Otherwise such Orphans shall be bound Apprentice to some Handycraft Trade (the Master or Mistress of such Orphan not being of the Profession called Quakers) till they shall come of Age unless some kin to such Orphan will undertake to maintain & Educate him or them for the interest or income of his or her Estate without Diminution of the Principal whether the same be great or small. . . ."

By an act of 1755 the churchwardens of every parish of North Carolina were required to furnish to the justices of the orphans' court, at its annual session, the names of children without guardians. Failure to perform this duty was punishable by a fine of "ten pounds proclamation money each." The court was to appoint guardians for all such children, and these guardians were to make reports to the court of their wards and apprentices. When the court "shall know or be informed that any guardian or guardians by them respectfully appointed, do waste or convert the money or estate of any orphan to his or her own use, or do in

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. iii.



any manner mismanage the same . . . or neglects to educate or maintain any orphan according to his or her degree and circumstance," the court was then empowered to establish other rules and regulations for the better management of such estate and "for the better educating and maintaining such orphans." When the profits of any orphan's estate "shall be more than sufficient to maintain and educate him" the surplus was to be invested on good and sufficient security. But if the estate "shall be of so small value that no person will educate or maintain him or her for the profits thereof, such orphan shall by the direction of the court be bound apprentice, every male to some tradesman, merchant, mariner, or other person approved by the court, until he shall attain the age of twenty-one years, and every female to some suitable employment till her age of eighteen years, and the master or mistress of every such servant shall find and provide for him or her diet, clothes, lodging and accommodations fit and necessary, and shall teach, or cause him or her to be taught, to read and write, and at the expiration of his or her apprenticeship shall pay every such servant the like allowance as is by law appointed for servants by indenture or custom, and on refusal shall be compelled thereto in like manner. . . ."

Further legislation on the subject of the maintenance and education of orphans was enacted in North Carolina in 1762 and was justified, according to the preamble, by the "experience that the court of each respective county, exercising the power of regulating the education of orphans, and the management of their estates, have proved of singular service to them." This law differed from previous legislation in one essential point. Formerly the churchwardens of every parish were required to report to the court the names of orphans and poor children without guardians or masters. By this act that duty was transferred to the grand jury of every county. Provision was further made for an orphans' court to be held annually by the justices of every inferior court of pleas and quarter sessions; at this court accounts of guardians were exhibited and complaints heard.

The educational features of this law have a certain interest. The guardian of any orphan whose estate furnished the orphan an economic competency was to supervise his education and maintenance. When the estate was of such small value that "no person will educate and maintain him or her for the profits thereof," the orphan was to be bound apprentice by the court in the manner prescribed by earlier legislation. Masters or guardians refusing to observe the requirements of the law or of the indentures respecting education and training in a trade "shall be compelled thereto." And if on complaint made to the court it appeared that apprentices had been ill used and not taught or trained under the terms of the law and the indentures, they were immediately removed and bound to other suitable persons.

With the exception of certain vestry acts, the act of 1762 remained until the national period practically the only legislation dealing with apprentices and the poor in North Carolina. Under this law, as already noted, the duty of reporting to the justices of the local court the names of orphans and poor children without guardians or masters was transferred from the churchwardens to the county grand jury. By the Vestry Act of 1777 similar authority was transferred from the vestrymen to the "overseers of the poor." Thus the full power of controlling the maintenance and education of the poor was taken from a parochial body and vested in the State. From such a transfer of authority developed the theory that caring for and "educating" the poor is primarily the function of the State, and in this conception is found the origin of the element of charity which was early attached to public educational effort in the South.

Revisions were gradually made in the law in North Carolina, but the principles of poor relief and of the apprenticeship system remained throughout the nineteenth century practically as they appeared in the early legislation. The main features of the law of 1762 remained essentially unchanged until about 1846. Before the Civil War, however, it was not obligatory on the master to teach a colored apprentice to read and write, and authority was

given the court to place children in orphan asylums or in other incorporated institutions of a charitable character. By an act of 1889, which is still in force, the master was required to provide as follows for his apprentice:

Diet, clothes, lodging and accommodations fit and necessary; that the apprentice be taught to read and write and the rules of arithmetic to the double rule of three; six dollars in cash, a new suit of clothes and a new Bible at the end of the apprenticeship; and such other education as may be agreed upon and inserted in the indenture by the clerk.

Legislation on the subject was enacted in South Carolina in the last decade of the seventeenth century. By an act of 1695 commissioners of the poor were appointed with power "to take out of the public money of the province not exceeding ten pounds per year, and of that to give such competent sum or sums of money for and towards the necessary relief of the lame, impotent, old, blind, and such other persons being poor and not able to work, as to them shall seem convenient. And it shall be lawful for the said persons or any three of them, with the assistance of one or more justices of the peace, to employ any such person in such work as to them shall seem most fit, and also to bind any poor children to be apprentices, where they shall see convenient, till every male child shall come to the age of twenty-one years and every female child to the age of nineteen years or the time of her marriage. . . ."

In 1698 an additional act was passed, but it contained little that was new except a provision for the care of pauper seamen who had been "brought in and left here upon the charge of the public." At the same time legislation was enacted to encourage the importation of white servants. The sum of thirteen pounds was promised for every white servant between the ages of sixteen and forty, Irish excepted, and the term of service of such servants was prescribed.

Another act for the better relief of the poor of the colony was passed in 1712, when the earlier legislation was repealed. By this

act the vestries of the several parishes were empowered to nominate overseers of the poor annually, who, together with the churchwardens, were to have oversight of the poor. Assessments were to be made on real and personal property, and the churchwardens and overseers of the poor, with the consent and approval of the vestry, were empowered to bind out and apprentice children as before. By a law of 1740 masters were required to teach their apprentices a "lawful business, art, trade, or mystery specified in the indenture," and this requirement remained the general law on the subject. As late as 1882 the same provisions were in force, and they have been retained substantially unchanged until the present. Legislation on the subject in South Carolina was not very extensive, and it is also remarkable that it contained no requirements that masters provide for their apprentices formal educational facilities demanded by similar legislation in other States. This apparent defect of the law in that State was not improbably due to the extensive facilities for the education of the poor, through charity schools and other institutions of an eleemosynary character, with which the State was early provided.

The law of Georgia was not altogether unlike that of Virginia and North Carolina. In the main it required the clerk of the court to bind out children as follows :

Where it shall appear to the said court that the annual profits of the estate of any orphan is not sufficient for the education and maintenance of such orphan, it shall be the duty of such court forthwith to bind out the said orphan for the whole or such part of the time of such orphan's minority as to them shall seem best ; and the person to whom such orphan shall be bound, shall undertake to clothe and maintain such apprentice to be taught to read and write the English language, and the usual rules of arithmetic.

This law was in force a large part of the eighteenth century and fully half of the nineteenth. Later the following was enacted and has remained the law on the subject :

It shall be the duty of the master to teach the apprentice the business of husbandry, house service, or some other useful trade or



occupation, which shall be specified in the instrument of apprenticeship; shall furnish him with protection, wholesome food, suitable clothing, and necessary medicine and medical attendance; shall teach him habits of industry, honesty, and morality; and shall cause him to be taught to read English; and shall govern him with humanity, using only the same degree of force to compel his obedience as a father may use with his minor child.

The first legislation enacted in what is now the State of Tennessee was practically the same as the law of 1762 of North Carolina, its parent State. This law required the master or mistress of every orphan apprenticed to find and provide for him or her diet, clothes, lodging, and accommodations fit and necessary and to teach or cause him or her to be taught "to read and write and cypher as far as the rule of three." A later enactment required the master or mistress, at the expiration of the apprenticeship, to pay the apprentice, in addition to the usual stipulations of the contract, the sum of twenty dollars and to furnish him with one good suit of clothes.

The law in Louisiana required the master to instruct the apprentice in his art, trade, or profession and to teach him or cause him to be taught to read, write, and cipher. In addition to this requirement the following provisions appeared early and have remained the principal legislation on the subject of apprenticing poor children:

In every case where any person shall be bound in any place, where there shall be a school established, either as an apprentice or servant, who shall be under the age of twenty-one years, there shall be a clause in the indentures binding the master or mistress to teach or cause to be taught the said apprentice or servant to read and write, as also to instruct him in the fundamental principles of arithmetic.

As early as February, 1807, a law in what is now the State of Mississippi required the overseers of the poor to make returns to the county courts twice a year of all poor orphans in their districts and of such other children within the same "whose parents they shall judge incapable of supporting them, and

bringing them up in honest ways." Such children were later to be bound apprentices; and the master or mistress of every apprentice "shall engage by a covenant, to be entered in the indenture, to provide the apprentice with a sufficiency of good and wholesome provisions, necessary clothing, washing and lodging; to teach the said apprentice the business or occupation which he pursues for a livelihood, and also, to read, write and cypher as far as the rule of three; and at the expiration of said apprenticeship, to furnish the said apprentice with one complete new suit of clothing, and two shirts; if a female, one complete new suit of clothes, and two shifts." By a later enactment this was changed to read, "to furnish the said apprentice with one complete new suit of clothes and two changes of linen."

Later still the law required the person to whom the apprentice was bound to teach him or her "some art, trade, or business, to be particularized in the indenture," and reading, writing, and common arithmetic, "including the rule of three; and also, to furnish him or her, at the expiration of said apprenticeship, a genteel suit of clothes, not less than twenty dollars in cost, and ten dollars in money." A further revision of the law required the master to treat his apprentice humanely, to teach him or her the occupation "which such person may follow," and to send him or her to school until "he or she may learn to read, write, and perform any ordinary calculation incident to the life of a farmer; and at the expiration of the apprenticeship, to furnish such apprentice with two suits of new clothing of a substantial kind." This, with a few slight changes, has remained the law on the subject in Mississippi.

Under early legislation in Alabama the justices of the county courts were to appoint the overseers of the poor and to have control of all phases of poor relief. The duties of the overseers were, among others, to make returns to the county courts of the poor orphans, children of criminals and of parents incapable of "bringing them up in honest ways." Such children were to be bound apprentices. With a few slight revisions this law remained in force

throughout the nineteenth century and provided that "the person to whom such apprentice shall be bound, shall engage by a covenant, to be entered in the indenture, to provide the apprentice with a sufficiency of good and wholesome provisions, necessary clothing, washing, lodging; to teach the said apprentice the business or occupation which he pursues for a livelihood; and also to read, write, and cypher, as far as the rule of three; and at the expiration of said apprenticeship, to furnish the said apprentice with one complete new suit of clothing, and two shirts; if a female, one complete new suit of clothes, and two shifts."

The earliest law on the subject of apprenticing poor children in Arkansas, enacted just prior to 1840, remained essentially unchanged throughout the century. The educational feature, however, did not apply between 1840 and the Civil War to free negroes and mulattoes, who were otherwise apprenticed in the same manner as other children. The law required the master or mistress to whom the children were bound to "covenant to teach the apprentice some useful art, trade or business, to be particularized in the covenant; and shall be further bound therein to teach said apprentice reading, writing and arithmetic, to the rule of three inclusive. . . . In all such covenants, by parents binding their children, the indenture shall contain the covenant requiring the minors to be sent to school at least one fourth of their time, after they are seven years of age."

The law in Florida required the county courts to bind out all minors who were poor orphans, vagrant children, the children of vagrants, and children abandoned by their parents. Boys were to be bound until the age of twenty-one and girls until they reached the age of eighteen years. At the close of the nineteenth century the law provided that "the indenture of apprenticeship shall in all cases contain a covenant by the master or mistress to teach the apprentice some art, trade, business or occupation to be particularized therein, and also the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic, and to give said apprentice a new suit of clothes,

shoes and blanket immediately upon the lawful expiration of the term of apprenticeship." Minor revisions were later made.

In Texas the law applied to males until they were twenty-one and to females until they were eighteen years of age. The master was required to furnish the apprentice sufficient food and clothing, to treat him humanely, to furnish him medicine and medical attention when necessary, and to teach or cause him to be taught to read and write. The law also provided that the master should, "if practicable, send said minor to school at least three months in each year during the continuance of such apprenticeship, after said minor has arrived at the age of ten years, and while such minor is within the scholastic age."

In its essential features the system of apprenticeship applied to poor children, orphans, illegitimate children, to those whose economic competency was insufficient to maintain and educate them "according to their rank and degree," and to girls as well as boys. The system sometimes applied to negro and mulatto children also, although the indentures did not always make it obligatory on the master to teach his negro or mulatto apprentices to read and write. There are on record, however, a few cases of free negro children who were bound out and apprenticed under indentures which gave them the benefit of the usual educational features of the system. The practice of apprenticing children of the classes just mentioned was very general throughout the South, though more extensive in some States than in others; and in the main the indentures differed but little, if any, from the apprenticeship system in operation in other parts of the country. It is clear that the system was inherited from England and that it was a very highly important agency, especially during the colonial period, for the elementary education of dependent and unfortunate children. Such children were recognized as entitled to protection and to certain vocational and educational advantages.

The principal agencies for putting the machinery of the apprenticeship plan into operation were the county courts, which



met quarterly or oftener. The powers of these courts were conferred by legislation or were derived from custom or from the common law. Their interest in the poor and dependent children was usually more than nominal, perhaps, though the educational provisions of the indentures were not always enforced; and it is not unlikely that in some cases the indentures or their interpretations were more favorable to masters than to apprentices. Guardians or masters were required to report annually to the courts, and the justices were likewise required to make inquiry annually concerning the observance of the law. Often, however, the enforcement of the agreements or indentures depended on whether the apprentices, through friends or the grand jury, were able to get their cases before the court. Complaints of failure to comply with the law and the indentures were frequent, and penalties for neglect were often heavy. The records show that occasionally a master was summoned to answer the complaint of his apprentice and to "shew the court reasons why he does not teach him to read, as by indenture he is obliged." In such a case the master usually promised to "put his apprentice forthwith to school." The indentures did not always contain the educational requirements of the system, despite the directions of the law; and often, no doubt, children were able to read and write before they were apprenticed. In such cases, of course, there was no legal necessity for including the educational requirements in the agreement.

The extent of the practice in the South will probably never be accurately known. Evidence on this point is scarce and more or less inaccessible. Moreover, it is not improbable that the children who were apprenticed often took up their places in the homes of the guardians or masters on conditions of maintenance and care ordinarily granted other members of the household. In some cases the guardians or masters doubtless gave their apprentices essentially the same attention given their own children; and when apprentices were ill used the law or custom required their removal and they were reapprenticed to other masters approved by

the court. The success of the educational feature of apprenticeship, therefore, naturally depended on the interest of the masters or guardians as well as on the desire of the apprentices to get "book learning." This was as true of the apprenticeship system as it is true of the educational features of public-welfare endeavor today; and from the earlier practices valuable lessons may be gained for present-day effort in the important enterprise of caring for the delinquent and dependent children.

It was noted in the beginning of this chapter that the apprenticeship practices were economic, humanitarian, and religious in purpose. The old apprenticeship laws generally recognized first the economic or industrial or vocational purpose, because there was need for skilled artisans or workers. This purpose came to be the dominating one; though the humanitarian, religious, or philanthropic purpose may be seen in some legislation and practice of colonial times. In the main, however, the purpose was to give poor, unfortunate, and neglected children opportunity to learn useful trades and occupations so that they could become self-supporting and not public charges. The principal trades and occupations taught the apprentices included that of bricklayer, saddler, tailor, millwright, silversmith, barber, blacksmith, cooper, carpenter and joiner, cordwainer and shoemaker, twiner and weaver, in addition to the usual agricultural and domestic occupations so important in the life of the South. It is not unlikely, therefore, that both the courts and the masters were more nearly interested in the industrial than in the educational features of the apprenticeship plan and through it sought to relieve the community of the financial burden incident to caring for its dependents.

In the purposes, plans, and practices of the poor laws and the apprenticeship system of colonial times valuable lessons appear for the teacher, the administrator, and the social reformer of today. The old system in theory sought to give vocational and industrial training, to protect the poor and unfortunate children and to put educational opportunity within their reach, and to

promote community well-being. Through the system a distinct form of compulsory education was provided, crude and defective but containing useful elements. But the general plan of apprenticeship, though admittedly of service during the colonial period and even later, was capable of wider usefulness than it served. At best it was haphazard and neglectful in operation and failed to develop a wholesome public attitude toward social problems of that period. Moreover, it not improbably served to delay the early development of an adequate public-school system and to inject into the school system finally set up the element of charity, which has until recent years proved a mischievous influence.

Today there is a growing consciousness in the South that the State owes a peculiar duty to delinquent and neglected children. They have become objects of serious social concern. Some of them are cared for in orphanages or other institutions, but many remain neglected and, through no fault of their own, are denied the opportunity for wholesome growth and useful citizenship. Through juvenile courts, probation officers, children's home societies, boards of charities, and public-welfare agencies of various kinds the South is recognizing the obligation to these classes, who have always been present in organized social groups. The problem is a significant one for education and educators and presents a unique challenge to all good citizens. Its solution is to be found in intelligent recognition of the condition as it exists, in sensible publicity by which the public can keep safely informed, in a rational coördination of all social agencies both public and private, in a redirection of educative forces of all kinds, and in a new emphasis on personal and community ideals and the essentials of effective citizenship.

Thus new duties are laid on the school and the teacher, whose interest and activities, if properly conceived and performed, will extend as never before far away from the schoolhouse to every man, woman, and child in the community. For the teachers are

now more than at any time in the past the keepers and the guardians of the public welfare: through them it must be protected and promoted and extended to all members of the community, the State, and the nation; and largely through their work universal education and equality of educational opportunity will eventually be made realities in the life of all the people.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Account for the development of the poor laws and the apprenticeship system in England.

2. Why was the apprenticeship system set up in the Southern colonies?

3. Examine the early legislation and records on the subject in your State for (a) purpose, (b) plan of operation, and (c) the extent of the system. In what way did the apprenticeship practices form an elementary system of education for the poor and dependent children of colonial times? Point out its advantages; its disadvantages.

4. In what way or ways were the apprenticeship laws and practices humanitarian, philanthropic, religious, vocational, industrial, or economic in purpose? Why was the economic purpose probably most powerful in the system?

5. In what way or ways did the apprenticeship plan retard the early development of a public-school system? Did it in any way help to promote an interest in public educational effort in your State? In what respect did it form a compulsory system of education for poor and unfortunate children?

6. Examine the court records of your county for peculiar examples of the apprenticeship system. Why is the system less extensive today than a hundred years ago? How are poor and dependent children cared for in your State today?

7. What effort is your State making to promote social well-being through the education and training of neglected, delinquent, and dependent children? What are the organized public agencies for this work in your State? Are the dominating purposes of such agencies economic, humanitarian, philanthropic, charitable, religious, vocational, recreational, or corrective?



8. What lessons have the purposes, plans, and results of the old apprenticeship system for the teacher and the educational administrator or social worker today? Point out the relation between it and public educational enterprises of the present.

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## CHAPTER IV

### THE ACADEMY MOVEMENT

*Outline of the chapter.* (1) In general, three different types of secondary schools have appeared in the educational development of the South,—the Latin grammar school, the academy, and the public high school.

2. The academy appeared in England after 1660 to supply the need of education for the nonconformists, but in America it grew out of frontier conditions. In the South the academy was of two kinds, one local and short-lived, the other more pretentious and of longer life. Some academies owed their origin to sectarian pride, while others grew out of the so-called community or "old field schools." Evidence of this appears in certain descriptions of early academies, especially that given by John Davis about 1800.

3. The influence of denominational interest was very marked, however, in the development of early academies. This appears from the work of the Methodists, the Quakers, the Baptists, and especially of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, whose educational interests were wide and powerful throughout the South.

4. Numerous academies were established and were doing highly creditable work in the South by 1800, and the work continued until about 1850.

5. The manual-labor schools and the military schools were two interesting variants of the academy. Both of these types of schools were popular for a time.

6. The principal characteristic of the academies made them peculiar educational institutions in purpose, in organization and control, in curriculum, and often in results. The academies influenced the programs of higher educational institutions, the training of teachers, the higher education of women, and were the nuclei from which many Southern colleges grew.

7. The academy began to decline in the South after the Civil War, when public education received a new meaning; since that time its place has been largely taken by the public high school.

Three very different types of so-called secondary schools have appeared in the educational growth of this country. The first was the Latin grammar school of the colonial period, in which the classics and elementary mathematics were taught. This kind of school reached its greatest development in New England. It was not an important institution in the South, although occasionally such a school was found in that region. The academy was the second type of secondary school. It began to appear about 1750 and rapidly developed in the South until the third type, the public high school, began to gain such an important place after the Civil War. The academy was a very highly respected means of education in the South, where it extended in greater numbers than in other sections of the country. Its most phenomenal period of growth covered the first half of the nineteenth century. After 1870 it began to yield its place to the public high school, which received marked impetus by the Peabody Fund, which was established a few years before that date.

A certain historical interest attaches to the manner by which the word "academy" came to apply to the type of school which went under that name in the United States and gave a form of secondary instruction. The word was often used to describe schools of one sort or another by numerous notable educational essays which were produced by the spirit of the Renaissance. In Milton's "Tractate on Education" (1644) the word "academy" was used to describe a school where "a complete and generous culture" was furnished. The term was also used by the non-conformists in England to describe their boarding schools; Daniel Defoe used the word in "Essay on Projects," first published about the close of the seventeenth century, in a sense similar to that used by Milton and by numerous others who wrote on the subject of education. Defoe used the word "academy," however, to designate a society of learned men to promote the arts, sciences, or literature. And Benjamin Franklin, who claimed to have been greatly influenced by the "Essay on Projects," formulated, near the middle of the eighteenth century, a plan for the public

education of the youth of Pennsylvania which showed the influence of the celebrated English author. The pamphlet, which contained Franklin's plan for an academy, had an extensive circulation and was widely read. Moreover, before the close of the eighteenth century numerous educational institutions appeared in the United States which in organization and management and in the course and method of instruction obviously followed Franklin's plan.

The academy appeared in England after the Restoration (1660) to supply the need of education for the nonconformists, who not unlikely used the term as employed by Milton to designate the schools which they established. The Act of Uniformity, as renewed in 1662, was one of the series of intolerant laws enacted under the second Parliament of Charles II. Under this act clergymen who refused to accept in its entirety the Book of Common Prayer were excluded from holding their benefices. About two thousand clergymen, fully one fifth of all the rectors and vicars of the English Church, were driven from their parishes. Those refusing to conform to that Church formed one class, known as dissenters or nonconformists. Moreover, the Act of Uniformity required the license of the Bishop as a qualification for teaching and also excluded dissenters from the privileges of the universities; and the Five Mile Act of 1665 completed the code of persecution against the nonconformists. Under its provisions clergymen excluded by the Act of Uniformity were required to take an oath that they would not under any pretext take up arms against the king and would at no time "endeavor any alteration of government in Church or State." If they refused to take such an oath they were not permitted to go within five miles of any borough or any place where they had previously ministered. Most of the dissenters belonged to the urban and trading classes, and the effect of this act was to deprive them of any religious teaching whatever.

Many of the dissenters thus deprived of their former means of livelihood took to teaching through necessity. Others, however, began to teach by choice, while many of them were doubtless



moved by a high sense of duty to provide educational facilities by which their future leaders could be trained. But on account of the laws enacted against them, all those who early engaged in teaching were forced to teach by stealth or to become migratory in order to escape persecution by their relentless enemies. In England, therefore, the academy was a result of nonconformity and sprang up as a protest against religious tyranny and the sectarian intolerance of the schools. Moreover, its rise shows the appearance of a demand for schools which were not exclusive in character but were open to all. It is of interest to note, therefore, that the English academy did not draw its students exclusively from the dissenters and that it frequently supplied an education for the children of the poor as well as for those who could pay the fees.

The academy in America has been called the product of the frontier period of national development and the *laissez faire* theory of government. But in this country the earlier schools of the academy type, especially those which developed from the work and influence of the dissenters, were very largely denominational and under ecclesiastical control. Not infrequently the motives back of their establishment found root in denominational interest and sectarian pride. Later, however, with a phenomenal increase in denominations, there developed a marked impatience with sectarian strife. A new but persistent educational problem resulted—the problem of promoting schools and the means of education in communities which were remarkable for their religious diversity. This impatience and discontent gave expression to a protest against using the school as a means of teaching blind obedience to religious dogma and formalism. Soon the general principle was evolved that sectarianism and denominationalism should not be a part of school instruction—that the task of the school-teacher was not to give instruction in theology and religious dogma. On the other hand, however, the equally significant belief developed that the broad and fundamental aspects of religion should be stressed fully and earnestly. Meanwhile men appeared who,

though of different religious beliefs, were united on the subject of the necessity for education and learning. Therefore, although the academy in America grew into a school which was pervaded by a deep and intense religious spirit, it became, in general, nonsectarian. Moreover, the academy was not exclusive but democratic in character and reflected the new American spirit, which demanded opportunity to settle "American problems in an American way."

Academies in the Southern States were divided into two principal classes. One class was local and modest in its claims, transient and short-lived, though capable, in the main, of supplying creditable educational facilities in the communities which they served. Schools of this class were also frequently called old field schools, hedge schools, or forest schools. And the origin of many academies in the South appeared not only in the old field school or the community school but also in the tutorial system. With an increase in population educational facilities increased, and those schools which were more substantially established sought incorporation by legislative enactment, with some of the most influential men of the community as trustees. The other class had a wider patronage, was more pretentious, and possessed creditable equipment and frequently more or less substantial endowments, which naturally enabled the institution to extend its usefulness and prolong its career. All academies, however, were usually privately controlled and managed by an incorporated board of trustees. Incorporation, which gave the trustees a legal existence and full authority to carry on the work of the school, was all that most of the academies asked of the State, and this was usually all the official recognition or assistance given, though occasionally an academy was given the privilege of raising funds by lottery. Fees were invariably charged, though in a few instances poor children were taught free of tuition charges; in some cases free tuition was allowed poor children in return for certain privileges or aid extended by the State. The purpose of the academy was usually the same, whether large or small. With

the growth of a strong democratic spirit in the revolutionary period the idea of a liberal education appeared, and the ideal of education for its own sake and for its value in promoting individual worth developed. This idea of a liberal education for heightening individual development was the dominant aim of the academy movement. And while the academy primarily served those individuals who were able to pay for its advantages, it also served in a larger way the entire community.

All the earlier academies, however, did not owe their origin to sectarian pride and denominational interest. As often, perhaps, schools which were dignified by the name "academy" grew from tutorial instruction in the family of some prominent citizen in the community or from the so-called community or old field schools. Evidence for this explanation of the origin of many earlier academies appeared in the experiences of that class of teachers who found temporary employment as tutors in the South. One of the most striking of these testimonies was made by John Davis, an Englishman, in "Travels of Four Years and a Half in the United States."<sup>1</sup> Davis was a man of more than ordinary education and training and of pleasing address, and during his stay in this country, from 1798 to 1802, numbered among his friends many men of high political and social station. He was a private tutor in New York and South Carolina and Virginia, and his descriptions of men and manners have an interesting educational significance. The sketch below tells of his work as a tutor in Virginia. With letters of introduction from Thomas Jefferson and other prominent men, Davis went to the plantation of a Mr. Ball, probably in Prince William County, and engaged to teach his and his neighbors' children.

The following day every farmer came from the neighborhood to the house, who had any children to send to my academy, for such they did me the honor to term the log hut in which I was to teach. Each man brought his son, or his daughter, and rejoiced that the day was

<sup>1</sup>London, 1803. The copy which the author examined is in the Library of Congress.

arriving when their little ones could light their tapers at the torch of knowledge! I was confounded at the encomiums they heaped upon a man whom they had never seen before, and was at a loss what construction to put upon their speech. No price was too great for the services I was to render their children; and they all expressed an eagerness to exchange perishable coin for lasting knowledge. If I would continue with them seven years they would erect for me a brick seminary on a hill not far off; but for the present I was to occupy a log house, which, however homely, would soon vie with the sublime college of William and Mary, and consign to oblivion the renowned academy in the vicinity of Fauquier Court House. I thought Englishmen sanguine; but these Virginians were infatuated.

I now opened what some call an academy, but others an old field school; and, however it may be thought that content was never felt within the walls of a seminary, I, for my part, experienced an exemption from care, and was not such a fool as to measure the happiness of my condition by what others thought of it.

It is worth while to describe the academy I occupied on Mr. Ball's plantation. It had one room and a half. It stood on blocks about two feet and a half above the ground, where there was free access to the hogs, the dogs, and the poultry. It had no ceiling, nor was the roof lathed or plastered, but covered with shingles. Hence, when it rained, I moved my bed (for I slept in the academy), to the most comfortable corner. It had one window, but no glass nor shutter. In the night, to remedy this, the mulatto wench who waited on me, contrived ingeniously to place a square board against the window with one hand, and fix the rail of a broken down fence against it with the other. In the morning when I returned from breakfasting in the "great big house," (my scholars being collected), I gave the rail a forcible kick with my foot, and down tumbled the board with an awful roar. . . .

It was pleasurable to behold my pupils enter the school over which I presided; for they were not composed only of truant boys, but some of the fairest damsels in the country. Two sisters generally rode on one horse to the school door, and I was not so great a pedagogue as to refuse them my assistance to dismount from their steed. A running footman of the negro tribe, who followed with their food in a basket, took care of the beast; and after being saluted by the young ladies by the courtesies of the morning, I proceeded to instruct them, with great exhortations to diligence of study.



Common books were only designed for common minds. The unconnected lessons of Scott, the tasteless selections of Bingham, the florid harangues of Noah Webster, and the somniferous compilations of Alexander were either thrown aside, or suffered to gather dust on the shelf; while the charming essays of Goldsmith and his not less delectable novel, together with the impressive works of Defoe, and the mild productions of Addison, conspired to enchant the fancy, and kindle a love for reading. The thoughts of these writers became engrafted on the minds, and the combinations of their dictions on the language of the pupils.

Of the boys I cannot speak in very encomiastic terms; but they were perhaps like all other school boys, that is, more disposed to play truant than to enlighten their minds. The most important knowledge to an American, after that of himself, is the geography of his country. I, therefore, put into the hands of my boys a proper book, and initiated them by an attentive reading of the discovery of the Genoese; I was even so minute as to impress on their minds the man who first described land on board the ship of Columbus. That man was Roderic Triana, and on my exercising the memory of a boy by asking him the name, he very gravely made answer, "Roderic Random."

Among my male students was a New Jersey gentleman of thirty, whose object was to be initiated in the language of Cicero and Virgil. He had before studied the Latin Grammar at an academy (I use his own words), in his native State; but the academy school being burnt down, his grammar, alas! was lost in the conflagration, and he had neglected the pursuit of literature since the destruction of his book. When I asked him if he did not think it was some Goth who had set fire to his academy school, he made answer, "So, it is like enough." Mr. Dye did not study Latin to refine his taste, direct his judgment, or enlarge his imagination; but merely that he might be enabled to teach it when he opened school, was his serious design. He had been bred a carpenter, but he panted for the honors of literature.<sup>1</sup>

I frequently protracted the studies of the children till one, or half past one o'clock; a practice that did not fail to call forth the exclamations both of the white and black people. "Upon my word," Mr. Ball would say, "the gentleman is diligent;" and Aunt Patty, the negro

<sup>1</sup>Davis relates that "the recreation of Mr. Dye, after the labor of study, was to get under the shade of an oak, and make tables, or benches, or stools for the academy. So true is the assertion of Horace, that the cask will always retain the flavor of liquor with which it is first impregnated."

cook, would remark, "He not like old Hodgkinson and old Harris, who let the boys out before twelve. He deserves good wages. . . ." <sup>1</sup>

I had been three months invested in the first executive office of pedagogue, when a cunning old fox of a New Jersey planter (a Mr. Lee), discovered that his eldest boy wrote a better hand than I. Fame is swift-footed; the discovery spread far and wide, and whithersoever I went, I was an object for the hand of scorn to point his slow, unmoving finger at, as a schoolmaster that could not write. Virginia gave me for the persecutions I underwent, a world of sighs; her swelling heavens rose and fell with indignation at old Lee and his abettors. But the boys caught spirit from the discovery. I could perceive a mutiny breaking out among them; and had I not in time broke down a few branches from an apple tree before my door, it is probable they would have displayed their gratitude for my instruction by throwing me out of the school window. But by arguing with one over the shoulders, and another over the back, I maintained with dignity the first executive office of pedagogue.

Three months had now elapsed, and I was commanded officially to resign my sovereign authority to Mr. Dye, who was in every respect better qualified to discharge its sacred functions. He understood tare and trett, wrote a copperplate hand, and, balancing himself on one leg, could flourish angels and corkscrews. I, therefore, gave up the "academy school" to Mr. Dye, to the joy of the boys, but to the sorrow of Virginia.

Judge Longstreet, of Georgia, in "Georgia Scenes," described an academy as he saw it in that State in 1790, which was not altogether unlike the one Davis taught in Virginia.

It was a simple log pen, about twenty feet square, with a doorway cut out of the logs, to which was fitted a rude door made of clapboards, and swung on wooden hinges. The roof was covered with clapboards also, retained in their places by heavy logs placed on them. The chimney was built of logs, diminishing in size from the ground to the top, and overspread inside and out with red clay mortar. A large three-inch plank (if it deserves that name) for it was wrought from the half of a tree's trunk entirely with the axe), attached to logs

<sup>1</sup>Davis admitted that he taught a greater number of hours than his contract required because of his interest in the lessons of Virginia, one of his "fair disciples."

by means of wooden pins, served the whole school for a writing-desk. At a convenient distance below it, and on a line with it, stretched a smooth log, which answered for the writer's seat.

Commenting on this description of what he called an old field school, the Reverend Barnas Sears, first general agent of the Peabody Fund, said that "intelligent persons, belonging to different States, have assured me that they were educated in such academies, as they were sometimes termed." Sherwood, in "A Gazetteer of Georgia," said of the academies of that State:

Many of these, however, are misnamed; for an academy supposes instruction in the higher branches of education; but some are no better than "old field schools." We hope the Legislature will see to it, in the future, that no charter of incorporation shall be granted to any body of trustees, unless it be a *sine qua non*, that in such academy there shall be taught, at least a part of the year, the learned languages and higher branches of the mathematics. Deception enough has been practiced in manufacturing academies, as they are called, to get money from the treasury. When established, they have no better claims to pecuniary aid than any other school: they draw money merely because they have trustees, and are incorporated!

Although the management of practically all academies in the later period of the movement was free from sectarianism in religion and from partisan bias in politics, as has already been pointed out, yet not a few of the earlier ones had their origin in denominational pride. This was due to the break-up of religious conservatism near the middle of the eighteenth century, when dissenters greatly increased and nonconformity began to assume powerful proportions. The Germans, who began to come in as early as 1745 and continued until near the close of the century, established schools and churches wherever they settled; the appearance of the Pennsylvania Quakers likewise added intellectual and moral strength; numerous European Baptists settled in the South, especially in North and South Carolina, and began an educational influence which was far-reaching; the educational influence of the Methodists of the "Asburyan period" rapidly

extended; and the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians greatly influenced educational growth in that region.

The schools of the Methodists were few before the close of the eighteenth century, yet the early educational work of this denomination serves to illustrate the statement that some of the earlier academies had their origin in sectarian interest. The Methodists were not numerous in this country before the Revolution, and as late as 1785 the entire American membership numbered only about eighteen thousand. But they showed interest in education and before the close of the century organized a few schools in the South. Ebenezer School, in Brunswick County, Virginia, founded in 1785, is said to have been the first Methodist school established in this country; and Cokesbury College, established at Abingdon, Maryland, in the same year, was the first Methodist College in the world. Bethel School (founded in Kentucky in 1790), Cokesbury School (established in Rowan, now Davie County, North Carolina, about 1793), and the Cokesbury or Bethel School (founded in Newberry County, South Carolina, in 1796) were some of the institutions begun by the Methodists. The trustees agreed that the South Carolina School should be free and that "only the English tongue and the sciences should be taught."

The most significant educational work of all these dissenters, however, was that of the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. They had great faith in the value of education, and their high esteem and reverence for an educated ministry led them to emphasize secondary and collegiate training. They spread over practically all the colonies, but were especially strong in the South, where they became the leaders of intellectual and religious development during the latter half of the eighteenth century. In every community where they came a schoolhouse and church sprang up simultaneously with the settlement; "almost invariably as soon as a neighborhood was settled preparations were made for preaching the gospel by a regular stated pastor, and wherever a pastor was located, in that congregation there was a classical school."



Moreover, Princeton College proved an educational impulse to the South. Scores of its graduates, many of them native Southerners, returned and became intellectual and religious leaders. Many of them promoted the "log college" movement which developed among the Presbyterians, supplying "log colleges," which often served as academies, colleges, and theological seminaries and which in many respects belonged to the regular academy type.

One of the most illustrious of the early Presbyterian teachers in the South was Dr. David Caldwell, whose celebrated "log college" was located near Greensboro, North Carolina, where it had a long and useful career. Caldwell was born in Pennsylvania in 1725 and was graduated from Princeton with the degree of bachelor of arts in 1761. Four years later he came to North Carolina as a Presbyterian minister, and in 1767 founded the school which in a short time became the most important institution of learning in the State and one of the most influential in the South. This "log college" was known for its thoroughness rather than for its extensive curriculum or its large enrollment. The average annual enrollment was between fifty and sixty, but it is said that more men entered the learned professions from this institution than from any other school in the South. Five of Dr. Caldwell's students became governors of States, several of them became members of Congress, and many others were distinguished as jurists, physicians, preachers, and teachers. But for a temporary interruption by the British in 1781 the institution had an unbroken career of success until 1822, when old age compelled its brilliant leader to retire from active service.<sup>1</sup>

Another famous Presbyterian teacher, who in his work and influence bears a striking similarity to Caldwell, was Moses Waddel. He was born in Rowan County, North Carolina, in 1770, and was graduated from Hampden-Sidney College, in Virginia, in 1791. He taught a few years before doing his college work, which he completed in a short time, and then, like Caldwell, began his life work as preacher and teacher. His first work after

<sup>1</sup> Knight, Public School Education in North Carolina, chap. iii.

leaving college was in Georgia; then he went to South Carolina, and in 1804 opened a school at Willington, on "the high ridge between the Savannah and Little Rivers." The Huguenot settlers and the Scotch-Irish of that region furnished him many students, but others gathered from "all parts of this and adjoining States, and the wild woods of the Savannah resounded with the echoes of Homer and Virgil, Cicero and Horace." Numerous students were here prepared for Princeton, Yale, and Harvard, and not a few of the better ones for the junior classes in these institutions. Among his pupils were many who became jurists, congressmen, governors, educators, and clergymen of wide reputation. Waddel was a tireless and devoted student and teacher of the classics. It is said that the dull boys of his classes would prepare more than one hundred lines of Virgil for a single recitation, and some of the brightest boys as many as a thousand lines. The school was large at times, often having an enrollment of two hundred. Waddel continued at its head until 1819, when he was elected president of Franklin College, now the University of Georgia. The school at Willington seems to have continued, however, under the direction of his sons for several years after the famous teacher went to Georgia.

There were numerous other schools which grew out of the Presbyterian influences in the South in the eighteenth century and which became educational leaders in the communities where they were established. Prince Edward Academy, in Virginia, established in 1775, grew into Hampden-Sidney College; Liberty Hall Academy, established in the same State in 1776, developed into Washington and Lee University; Clio's Nursery and Science Hall was opened about the beginning of the Revolution, in Iredell County, North Carolina, by Dr. James Hall, who was graduated from Princeton in 1774; Zion Parnassus was established near Salisbury, North Carolina, in 1785, by the Reverend Samuel C. McCorkle, who was graduated from Princeton in 1772. This school was well known for its normal department, which was the first attempt at teacher-training in North Carolina and one of

the first in this country, and for its assistance with tuition and books to worthy students. The school maintained a high order of scholarship and had an extensive influence. Six of the seven members of the first graduating class of the University of North Carolina received their college preparation in this academy.

Tate's Academy was founded in Wilmington, North Carolina, in 1760, by the Reverend James Tate, and was continued by him for nearly two decades; Crowfield Academy, opened near Charlotte, North Carolina, in 1760, was the nucleus from which Davidson College, in that State, developed. Queen's Museum, or Liberty Hall Academy, was another Presbyterian school in North Carolina which became known as an important institution for higher education. It was the last institution to seek incorporation from the king and the first to receive a charter from the new State. The school had its beginning in the work of the Reverend Joseph Alexander, who was graduated from Princeton in 1760 and who, with a Mr. Benedict, established a small classical school in a prosperous and intelligent community near Charlotte seven years later. In 1770 it was chartered by the Assembly as Queen's Museum, but the charter was repealed by the king and council. A second charter was secured, but only to meet the same fate; fear that the school would become a great and permanent advantage to the dissenters and a "fountain of republicanism" led to the repeal of the charters. In spite of royal disfavor, however, the institution flourished without a charter; the house was used for literary and debating clubs and accommodated the meeting which formulated the reputed Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. In 1775 the name was changed to Liberty Hall Academy, and two years later it received a charter from the State.

Sunbury Academy, chartered by the Legislature of Georgia, in 1788, occupied a high and influential place in the educational life of that State for nearly forty years. The success of this school is closely associated with the name of the Reverend William McWhir, who had charge of the institution for nearly thirty years. He was a native of Ireland and a licensed Presbyterian minister.

He came to America about 1783, for ten years had charge of an academy at Alexandria, Virginia, of which George Washington was a trustee, and in 1793 became principal of Sunbury Academy. The enrollment in this school averaged about seventy, but the pupils came from many counties in the southern part of the State. Dr. McWhir's great success as a teacher was attributed to his devout scholarship and to his qualities as a disciplinarian and instructor which left a profound impress on the educational progress of Georgia. ✓

Davidson Academy, located in what is now Nashville, Tennessee, was chartered by the Legislature of North Carolina, the parent State, in 1785. The school was rechartered as Cumberland College in 1806 and twenty years later as the University of Nashville, which had a long career of usefulness. But the early history of the academy is linked with the name of Thomas B. Craighead, a North Carolinian by birth and Scotch-Irish by descent. He was graduated from Princeton in 1775, was ordained a Presbyterian minister five years later, and early in 1785 took up his residence near Nashville. Colonel William Pope and General James Robertson represented Davidson County in the Legislature of North Carolina and secured the legislation incorporating Davidson Academy. These two men and other prominent citizens in the community were the trustees, and the school soon attained a high position in public esteem. The following year Craighead was elected principal, a position which he held successfully for two decades. His influence as teacher and preacher suggests the work of Caldwell in North Carolina and of Waddell in South Carolina.

One of the most interesting and, indeed, one of the most remarkable of these Presbyterian teachers was John Chavis, a full-blooded free-born negro of North Carolina. He was born in Granville County in that State about 1763. He early attracted the attention of the white people and was sent to Princeton "to see if a negro would take a collegiate education." As a private pupil under Dr. John Witherspoon, a famous teacher and president



of Princeton, Chavis's evidence of ability to learn convinced his friends that the experiment would be successful. After leaving college Chavis went to Virginia and engaged in religious work, but returned to his native State in 1805 at the request of Reverend Henry Patillo and engaged in religious and educational work under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church. He opened a classical school soon after his return and taught for a number of years in the counties of Chatham, Granville, and Wake in North Carolina.

Both as a preacher and teacher he was highly regarded by the best people in these communities. His English was said to be remarkable for its purity and its freedom from "negroisms," and his manner was impressive. He had a rare knowledge of Greek and Latin and of the Scriptures and was regarded as a powerful teacher and preacher. He continued his formal religious work until 1831, when the Legislature forbade negroes to preach. His work as a teacher, however, was perhaps the most remarkable feature of his life. His school was attended by the best white people of the community, among whom were several who later became distinguished. Willie P. Mangum, later United States Senator from North Carolina, and Charles Manly, who later became governor of the State, as well as other prominent people, were reported among his students. James H. Horner, for many years a well-known secondary educational leader in North Carolina, said of Chavis: "My father not only went to school to him but boarded in the family. . . . The school was one of the best to be found in the State." And Professor John Spencer Bassett says:

From a source of the greatest respectability I have learned that this negro was received as an equal socially and asked to table by the most respectable people in the neighborhood. Such was the position of the best specimen of the negro race in North Carolina in the days before race prejudices were aroused.

The work of the Presbyterians and other dissenters gave noticeable impetus to the academy movement after the Revolution, and

by 1800 numerous academies could be found in all the Southern States. In Virginia they appeared early and multiplied rapidly; by the close of the century twenty-five or more were flourishing in that State. Among the best known were Prince Edward Academy, Liberty Hall Academy, Fredericksburg Academy, Shepherdstown Academy, Norfolk Academy, Winchester Academy, Petersburg Academy, Alexandria Academy, and several others. By the middle of the nineteenth century more than two hundred had been incorporated, and there were scores of less pretentious ones that had not been chartered but were very active.

The practice of founding and chartering academies was equally as popular in the Carolinas. In North Carolina thirty were chartered by the Legislature before 1800, and from that time until the movement declined from two to twelve were incorporated at nearly every meeting of that body. Many academies appeared in South Carolina also between 1800 and 1850.

The constitution of Georgia in 1777 provided for schools to be supported in each county of the State at public expense, and the Legislature of 1783 provided a land endowment for a system of county academies, which it continued to control and support until 1840. This is the clearest example in the South of state support for academies. Under the same act a free school was established in Washington, Wilkes County, and two academies were founded—at Waynesboro, in Burke County, and at Augusta, in Richmond County. The latter academy became known as the Richmond County Academy and was perhaps the most famous and influential in the entire State. Its work continued with marked success throughout the ante-bellum period. In 1845 it had an equipment valued at \$30,000 and an annual income from real-estate holdings amounting to \$1600, besides \$12,000 worth of bank stock and considerable land. During the Civil War the building was converted into a Confederate hospital, and at the close of hostilities it was occupied for a time by Federal troops. The school was reopened, however, in 1868 and began again a career of great educational influence.

This plan of land endowment for academies and other stimuli given by the State promoted the growth of this type of institution. In 1785 the county academies were placed under the administrative system of the newly established state university, though its authority over those schools proved to be more nominal than real. The constitution of 1798 provided that the Legislature should "give such further donations and privileges" to the schools in operation at that time "as may be necessary to secure the objects of their institution." This greatly stimulated the growth of the academy, and by 1820 thirty-one had been chartered. The following year the sum of \$250,000 was set aside as an academic fund, the income of which was to be divided among certain authorized academies in the counties or to be appropriated to aid elementary education. The effect of this fund was immediate. More than three times as many academies were chartered during the next decade as were established during the previous forty years. In 1831 there were more than one hundred such schools in the State, and ten years later the number had greatly increased. In 1837, however, the academic fund had been transferred to the so-called common-school fund, and the number of academies chartered began noticeably to decline.

✓ The early history of education in Tennessee is a complicated story throughout. It is, as Phelan has so well said in his history of that State, closely connected with the history of public lands, which is the history of confusion. Tennessee was settled from North Carolina near the middle of the eighteenth century, and its history for many years was closely related to that of the parent State. Samuel Doak, a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, was one of the earliest teachers in what is now Tennessee and opened a school at Salem about 1780. Three years later the Legislature of North Carolina chartered Martin Academy in what is now Washington County, Tennessee, and granted it the same privileges and powers granted Liberty Hall Academy when that institution was incorporated in 1777. Martin Academy grew into Washington College in 1795 and has been called the first educational institution

established in the Mississippi Valley. In 1785 Davidson Academy in Nashville was incorporated. This institution was the beginning of Cumberland College, established in 1806, and became the University of Nashville in 1826,

One of the most interesting phases of the State's educational history developed from a compact to which Tennessee, North Carolina, and the Federal Government were parties, the terms of which agreement were expressed in the act of Congress of April 18, 1806. In 1790 North Carolina had ceded to the Federal Government all the lands within the territory now known as Tennessee. Four years later Tennessee was organized as a territory, and in 1796 it was admitted to the Union as the sixteenth State; but the Federal Government retained the lands ceded by the parent State until 1806. By the act of April 18 of that year, however, Congress conveyed to Tennessee, under specified conditions, so much of those lands as lay north and east of a certain line, afterward known as the Congressional reservation line. The reservation included all of West Tennessee and a large area in Middle Tennessee; and Tennessee conceded to the Federal Government the right to dispose of land in this jurisdiction, while the lands outside the reservation were ceded to the State on certain conditions. One of these conditions was that the State should appropriate one hundred thousand acres of land in one tract south of the French Broad River and the Holston River and west of the Big Pigeon River for the use of academies, one to be established by the Legislature in each county. The academy lands were not to be sold for less than two dollars an acre unless they were already occupied. In such a case the occupants were allowed to perfect their rights at one dollar an acre. This proviso greatly reduced the actual value of the cession. It was afterward found that a large part of the lands was occupied, and respect for the settlers' claims caused what appeared to be a munificent educational gift to yield only half the revenue expected.

This and other reservations made at the same time were the foundation of a college fund, an academy fund, and a common-



school fund, which were apparently intended to support a complete State system for the education of all the people. But the lands which were thus to form the basis of such a system were, by later legislation, disposed of at very low sums and the proceeds invested by commissioners appointed for the purpose. However, a few academies were early established and soon rapidly increased. By an act of September 13, 1806, provision was made for establishing academies in the several counties of the State and for appointing trustees for them, and in 1817 an act was passed which apparently contemplated making the academy part of a complete system. The law said:

Whereas, institutions of learning, both academies and colleges should ever be under the fostering care of the Legislature, and in their connection form a complete system of education, be it enacted that all the academies of this State shall be considered schools preparatory to the introduction of students into the colleges. . . .

It appears that under the act of September 13, 1806, and supplementary acts, thirty-eight academies were chartered, one for each county organized in the State at that time. Practically all these were for boys, and they seem to have been "the only public institutions of the time." It should be noted also that through such schools "public education made its entry into the State." It appears, however, that such academies as were organized between 1806 and 1827 were largely private enterprises and depended almost entirely on private patronage for their support; in fact, they had no reliable source of income until 1838. Moreover, difficulties arose which should have been foreseen from the outset. The State had been admitted to the Union ten years before the cession from the Federal Government and before it had been reached by the admirable Federal survey. Moreover, a large part of the land had been taken up by immigrants who had contended against the many hardships incident to frontier life. They had won homes in the face of discouraging odds, and neither a high sense of justice nor reverential regard for the regularity of

the law overcame sentiment or sympathy for such courageous pioneers. From the first, therefore, efforts to comply with the provisions of the land grants were met with substantial resistance. Occupation rights were confirmed upon conditions of long payments, with the time of such payments frequently extended. The prices of the lands were often lowered and interest was now and then remitted, with the result that the lands finally passed beyond the control of the State and of the schools. Confusing conditions arose early and confronted educational effort in Tennessee for many years.

In his message to the Legislature in 1821 Governor McMinn had said:

We all know that two hundred thousand acres of land south of the French Broad and Holston Rivers at the price of \$1 per acre was appropriated to the establishment of and support of colleges and academies; but in what manner collections on the sale of those lands have been made and to what amount, how much of the principal or interest has been voluntary or otherwise paid, or how much still remains due or to become due is scarcely known to any individual within the State, and perhaps it would not be practicable for the Legislature to inform themselves satisfactorily on the various points connected with the subjects by reports drawn from any department of the government.

The executive had advised the Legislature to take immediate steps to acquire full and accurate information on the whole subject. Nothing was done, however, and the matter of public lands for school support continued confused and unsatisfactory until 1838. In that year an act was passed creating the Bank of Tennessee and providing an annual payment of \$18,000 for academy support in exchange for the proceeds of the academy lands, which became part of the bank's capital. In 1840 an act was passed declaring that certain academies should be "known as the county academies of the State"; and the Bank of Tennessee was directed to pay the sum of \$18,000 annually for the support of such institutions, the sum to be distributed equally to each of

the seventy-four counties of the State. The faith of the State was pledged to the payment of this appropriation, and from that time until 1861 the payments were regularly made. The table below exhibits the operation of this fund from 1840 to 1861:

YEAR	APPROPRIATION	DISBURSEMENT	BALANCE
1840 . . . . .	\$18,000	\$7,920.00	\$28,080.00
1841 . . . . .	18,000	16,320.00	29,760.00
1842 . . . . .	18,000	28,560.00	19,200.00
1843 . . . . .	18,000	18,240.00	18,960.00
1844 . . . . .	18,000	20,360.00	16,600.00
1845 . . . . .	18,000	19,000.00	15,600.00
1846 . . . . .	18,000	11,931.36	21,668.64
1847 . . . . .	18,000	21,562.08	18,106.56
1848 . . . . .	18,000	23,442.24	12,664.32
1849 . . . . .	18,000	19,213.84	11,450.48
1850 . . . . .	18,000	18,202.74	11,247.74
1851 . . . . .	18,000	17,374.99	11,872.75
1852 . . . . .	18,000	17,501.92	12,370.83
1853 . . . . .	18,000	17,509.84	12,860.99
1854 . . . . .	18,000	16,129.20	14,731.79
1855 . . . . .	18,000	18,263.20	14,468.59
1856 . . . . .	18,000	14,875.40	17,593.09
1857 . . . . .	18,000	19,260.40	16,332.79
1858 . . . . .	18,000	21,348.98	12,983.81
1859 . . . . .	18,000	18,275.97	12,707.84
1860 . . . . .	18,000	15,863.30	14,844.54
1861 . . . . .	18,000	16,516.25	16,328.29

This form of support served for many years as an educational stimulus and promoted the development of academies in Tennessee. The number of such institutions naturally increased rapidly. Weeks says:

For many years they gave direction to the educational tone of the State, but they were not numerous enough to meet all educational wants, and others of like grade and character were established by private individuals, by social orders and above all by denominational interests. They continued to dominate and direct the educational interests of the State until 1873.

A large educational plan was mapped out in Louisiana by an act of 1805. An administrative body similar to that of New York State, and known as the "University of New Orleans," was instituted, the regents of which were certain civil officers and others, to be elected by the Legislature for life tenure. The same act empowered the regents to establish a college in New Orleans and one or more academies in each county of the territory "for the instruction of French and English languages, reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, and geography." It further provided for a number of academies "for the instruction of the youth of the female sex in the English and French languages, and in such branches of polite literature and such liberal arts and accomplishments as may be suitable to the age and sex of the pupils." For the more extensive communication of useful knowledge provision was made for establishing one public library in each county. The funds necessary to support this educational undertaking were to be raised by lotteries. The lottery provision was later revoked, however, and direct appropriations were substituted. Significant beginnings were thus made for carrying out the provisions of the act of 1805 with reference to the college and academies. But in 1821 the regents of the University of Orleans were abolished, and five years later the college was discontinued.

The county or parish academies contemplated in the original act were set in operation in at least a dozen counties by 1811, and the Legislature appropriated to each of them the sum of \$2000 for buildings and equipment, and an annual maintenance grant of \$500. In 1819 the annual appropriation was raised to \$600 and two years later to \$800. The act of 1821 also provided that eight "beneficiary students" should be educated at each academy receiving the legislative appropriation and should be furnished with books and writing materials. In 1827 it was enacted that the sum of \$2.62 monthly for each student be appropriated for the support of one or more schools in each county or parish, and in 1833 the Legislature enacted that funds appropriated for school support should be distributed on the basis of actual school attendance.



Schools with an enrollment of not more than ten children received \$4 a month for each; those which had an enrollment of ten to twenty were granted \$3 a month for each; schools with an enrollment of more than twenty would receive \$2.50 a month for each child, "provided the whole sum paid to any parish should not exceed the amount allowed it by law for that purpose," which at that time ranged from \$800 to \$1350 for each county.

On this basis the academy system in Louisiana continued until the passage of an act in 1847, which adopted a free public-school system. The academy movement in that State was influential in committing the public to the free-school principle and in the abolition of tuition charges. Moreover, about 1833 the custom of subsidizing "academies proper" for a term of years had begun. These schools were regular academies with self-perpetuating boards of trustees, who had the usual powers and privileges of educational corporations. The bounty from the State was given to these academies on the condition that free instruction be given the poor children.

Montpelier Academy was the first institution of this kind to receive aid from the State. Among the others which received aid before 1842 were Academy of Claiborne, Ouachita Female Academy, West Baton Rouge Academy, Avoyelles Academy, Catahoula Academy, Covington Female Seminary, Spring Creek Academy, Caddo Academy, Franklinton Academy, Pine Grove Academy, Providence Academy, Johnson Female Seminary, Greensburg Female Academy, Springfield Institute, Minden Female Seminary, Poydras Academy, Plaquemines Academy, Union Male and Female Academy, and Vermilionville Academy. In 1842 a bill was enacted to retrench expenses, and many educational appropriations were discontinued; three years later agitation began for a public-school system for the entire State. Up to that date, however, the estimated amount which the State appropriated to encourage county or parish academies was more than \$973,000, and the actual amount spent in subsidizing academies from 1833 to 1842 was more than \$127,000. Although the aid of the State was

greatly decreased in 1842, private academies continued to grow, and by the middle of the nineteenth century they were found in great numbers in Louisiana.

During a great part of the French and Spanish régime, in what is now the State of Mississippi, few schools of any kind were set up in the territory. Before the close of the eighteenth century, however, private tutors were employed by some of the wealthy planters, and some boys were sent to the East and North and even to Europe for their education. Around Natchez the people seemed especially interested in education and in 1799 petitioned Congress for educational aid. About the same time or a little later a few private schools were opened, and others would probably have been established if there had been a sufficient number of qualified teachers to take charge of them. One of the earliest schools in Mississippi was for girls and was established in Natchez in 1801 by the Reverend David Ker, who had had a successful academy at Fayetteville, North Carolina, ten years before. In 1802 Jefferson College was chartered by the territorial Legislature. This was the first educational institution to receive incorporation in Mississippi, but lack of funds delayed its opening until about 1811. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, it had an influential career. Washington Academy was chartered in Washington County about the same time and was exempted from taxation and given lottery privileges to raise funds for its support. In 1819 the Legislature chartered the Elizabeth Female Academy (the first girls' school to be incorporated in Mississippi and "the first fruits of Protestant denominational work in the extreme South"), which became an influential Methodist school. Gradually other private academies were established prior to 1850.

Many of the earliest settlers of what is now Alabama were from the older sections of the South and naturally brought with them the educational ideals and customs with which they were familiar. Private academies constituted one form of educational practice with which they were acquainted, and these institutions began to appear as early as 1811. The first educational legislation for

the region now known as Alabama was by the territorial Legislature of Mississippi, in 1811, when Washington Academy was established, but this institution seems to have had a very slow growth. But other private schools began to appear rapidly, and numerous ones were incorporated from 1812 through the antebellum period, not a few of which were granted lottery privileges for raising funds. Almost every Legislature incorporated one or more schools of this type, and at the outbreak of the Civil War a large number of academies were in operation.

Although Arkansas did not enter the Union until 1836, its earliest inhabitants were not lacking in facilities for education. The sources of the State's population had been Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, and Georgia. This population was more or less homogeneous and naturally held the same ideals which were found in the States from which it had come. School-teachers came in with the first American settlements and were numerous before the territory became a State. Some of the best known of the early teachers were Caleb Lindsey, who taught in Lawrence County as early as 1816; John Calloway, who had a school in Clark County; Moses Easburn, who taught school for sixty years, beginning in 1821; and Jesse Brown, who founded the Little Rock Academy ("a primary and academical school") in 1825. The schools taught by these and other teachers went under the general name of academies, but not a few of them doubtless gave more primary than secondary instruction. Later the more pretentious ones sought legislative incorporation, and from 1836 to 1860 a large number of such institutions were chartered.

Batesville Academy, in Independence County, the first school to receive a charter in Arkansas, was incorporated in 1836. The second educational institution to be chartered was the Fayetteville Female Academy, in October of the same year. From that time until the Civil War several private schools and academies were incorporated at nearly every session of the Legislature. The acts incorporating the schools were usually of the same type

and ordinarily granted the same privileges. By 1850 there were ninety academies reported in the State, and during the next decade this number was doubled.

Florida and Texas were the last of the Southern States to be admitted to the Union. They were admitted in 1845 and had the experiences of their older sisters to guide them in formulating educational policies. Something of educational importance had already been attempted in each, however, before this time. The Florida Education Society, formed at Tallahassee in 1831, was of considerable influence in collecting and diffusing educational information and in working to secure the establishment of such a system of schools as would be suited to the conditions and needs of the Territory. By 1840 eighteen or twenty private academies had been formed, each with trustees numbering from five to nine. The constitution of the Republic of Texas in 1836 declared: "It shall be the duty of Congress, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law a general system of education"; and an act of that Republic three years later granted three leagues of land to each county for the purpose of supporting an academy. Moreover, the constitution adopted when Texas came into the Union was very adequate in its provisions for educational support. Both of these States showed interest in schools as a public concern, though Florida's first common-school system was not inaugurated until 1849, and it was not until 1854 that a regular system of free schools was provided for Texas. However, private academies were active, though not very numerous, in both States during the ante-bellum period.

The manual-labor schools and the military schools were two interesting variants of the academy in the South. The former received a great impetus through the industrial work of the Pestalozzian-Fellenberg movement, which attracted attention in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Fellenberg was a companion and collaborer of Pestalozzi and established an institution at Hofwyl in Switzerland in 1806, in which he combined literary instruction and manual labor. The students pursued



their literary work in the mornings and farmed in the afternoons. The institution continued for forty years and attracted wide educational attention. Henry Barnard believed it had a wider influence than any other institution in Europe or America in the nineteenth century. Through its influence physical exercises began to claim attention in the United States; through discussion the public mind came to be more or less educated to an appreciation of their value, and there was an agitation for giving a place in the schools to physical training and gymnastics. This agitation proved somewhat disappointing, though it resulted in a widespread realization of a need for attention to the physical conditions of students. Confidence in the power of formal physical exercises later weakened, and the so-called gymnastic movement finally collapsed. Gradually, however, attention was called to such subjects as physiology and hygiene as aids in the preservation of health, and campaigns began for introducing them into the schools.

With the failure of the formal gymnastics movement, Fellenberg's idea of combining manual labor and intellectual pursuits was eagerly seized upon as the solution of the problem. Advocates of agricultural and mechanical work in educational institutions appeared early, but the movement did not gain much force until near the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Interest in the experiment gradually increased, however, and for two decades or more manual-labor schools sprang up in numerous places. The earliest school of this character in the United States seems to have been established at Lethe, in South Carolina, under the will of Dr. John De La Howe, which was made in 1786. The school had a useful career from 1805 until the Civil War, when the loss of endowment forced its suspension. The manual-labor feature was introduced widely in theological institutions, colleges, and academies in many States, and by 1830 most of the States had one or more institutions in which manual labor appeared as a necessary feature. The preservation and invigoration of health were no doubt powerful motives in the introduction of manual labor in many literary institutions, but the supposed

hygienic value probably had no more weight in promoting its adoption than the promising pecuniary advantage of the scheme or its value as an agency for recruiting sectarian ranks. It will be remembered that denominational controversies were intense during this period. Wherever practicable, farms and shops were provided for such schools adapted on the manual-labor plan, and the time was divided between manual labor and study.

The theoretical side of the experiment culminated in the early thirties, by which time the movement had also attained considerable practical proportions. Reverend Elias Cornelius, editor of the *American Quarterly Register* and secretary of the American Education Society, lectured and wrote on the subject, and the Fellenberg system continued to be advocated by numerous educational leaders. In June, 1831, an enthusiastic meeting of manual-labor advocates was held in New York, with the result that the "Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions" was formed, and Theodore D. Weld was appointed as its general agent. Weld had been connected with the Oneida Manual Labor Institute at Whitesboro, New York, which was one of the institutions made conspicuous by its manual-labor feature from 1827 to 1834. He was enthusiastic in advocating the new system and made a tour of many States, including several in the South, in the interest of the plan. In 1832 he made a report which contained the most elaborate presentation of the movement ever published, setting forth the claims of manual labor as a necessary part of a sound educational system.

The report advanced many ingenious and apparently plausible arguments in favor of manual labor. It claimed that the system of education in practice at that time jeopardized the health of the students, tended to effeminate the mind, was perilous to morals, failed to stimulate effort, destroyed habits of industry, and was so expensive that its practical results were noticeably anti-democratic. Moreover, the manual-labor feature furnished the kind of exercise best suited to students. Military exercises, the report argued, were proper in strictly military schools, but were

not adapted to any other and would not be "until fighting becomes the appropriate vocation of man and human butchery the ordinary business of life." Ordinary gymnastic exercises were not suitable because they lacked pecuniary value and were not productive of material resources. Manual labor would correct all these and numerous other educational defects. It would furnish exercises "natural to man" and adapted to intellectual interests, produce happy moral effects, and equip students with valuable practical acquisitions. In addition to these advantages it was further claimed that the new plan would promote habits of industry, independence of character and originality, and would render "permanent all the manlier features of character." It would also afford opportunity and facilities for "acquiring a knowledge of human nature." It promised to reduce the expense of education, to increase wealth, and to make all forms of honest labor democratic and honorable by destroying "these absurd distinctions in society" which make one's occupation the standard of one's work. Finally, manual labor would preserve republican institutions.

The "Society for Promoting Manual Labor in Literary Institutions" had a short life of activity. Weld served as its general agent only one year, and his successor was never appointed. The popularity of the movement which this organization sought to promote was likewise short-lived, though in the thirties and forties several institutions introduced the manual-labor feature.

The experiment was especially popular in several of the Southern States. The Virginia Baptist Seminary, from which Richmond College grew, made manual labor compulsory for all its students for a short time. Emory and Henry, founded by the Methodists in Virginia, in 1838, included manual labor as a part of its required program. There the students worked on the farm for two hours each afternoon and received from two to five cents an hour for their labor. Later the compulsory feature was abandoned, though the institution retained manual labor for a few years as a voluntary feature. Efforts were made also, but without success, to introduce the new plan in Hampden-Sidney College.

In Donaldson Academy, at Fayetteville, North Carolina, a school of this kind was begun in 1834 under the auspices of the Presbyterians. The enterprise was put in charge of the Reverend Simeon Colton, who, for a number of years, had been connected with similar work at Amherst, Massachusetts. At one time the Fayetteville school had one hundred and fifty students, but the manual-labor feature was discarded at the end of the second year, Colton becoming convinced that "close habits of study and manual labor were incompatible." About 1838 the experiment was tried in what is now Davidson College (near Charlotte, North Carolina), an institution under the control of the Presbyterians, but the plan collapsed there after three years' trial. A large number of the students were sons of farmers and had learned to work in the fields before taking up their collegiate studies; they thought it quite a loss of time, therefore, to plow and to cut wood while at college. The experiment was also made at Wake Forest, a Baptist institution in North Carolina, with the same or similar result.

South Carolina saw the feature tested in several instances. In the various reports of the free-school commissioners of that State in 1839, when the school system was critically examined, some believed that manual labor was the solution of the educational problem. But the report of James H. Thornwell and the Reverend Stephen Elliott, who were instructed to investigate the system and report to the Legislature, discarded manual-labor schools as "egregious failures" in almost every instance where they had been tried. The plan seems to have been tested, however, at Cokesbury or Bethel by the Methodists, at Erskine by the Associated Reformed Presbyterians, at Furman by the Baptists, and at Pendleton, South Carolina, by "working citizens," but in every case with the usual unsatisfactory result.

A manual-labor school was begun at Eatonton, Georgia, by the Baptists in 1832, and while it met with difficulties, as was anticipated, nevertheless the school for a short time "flourished beyond the expectations of the most sanguine." Another school was begun



by the Baptists in 1833 near Greensboro, in Greene County. It owned a thousand acres of land, "large and convenient buildings," and "large stocks of horses, cattle, and hogs." The students "work from two to three hours a day, growing cotton, corn, and potatoes, and are happy. . . . The Lord has prospered the school. In the first year a large number of the students professed religion." In 1832 a school was begun "in McIntosh," the Presbyterians began one near Athens in 1833, and the Methodists began one near Covington in 1835, which seems to have been planned on a large scale.

In Arkansas the trustees of the township schools, established by an act of February, 1843, were authorized to establish "a laboring school wherein the students shall be required to labor a portion of each day." The experiment was tried in that state in Benton Academy (in Saline County), which was chartered in 1842-1843, and in Far West Seminary (in Washington County), which was chartered in 1844-1845. Efforts were made about 1832 to organize a manual-labor school in the neighborhood of Tallahassee, Florida, but the undertaking was not successful.

Practically all the institutions which tested the new plan soon abandoned it, however, as unsatisfactory and impracticable, and the movement finally collapsed. Practical difficulties rather than the inherent weaknesses of the principles underlying the plan cooled enthusiasm for it. It should be noted also that the introduction of athletics in educational institutions proved a wholesome substitute for the physical features of the manual-labor scheme. However, the manual-labor idea was not lost. Instead, it appeared in the Morrill Act of 1862, which greatly influenced industrial education in the United States, and in another form in the manual-training movement of recent years, which is no doubt achieving some of the same purposes which the earlier movement sought to attain.

The military type of education—the other variant of the academy movement—was highly favored in the South, partly because of slavery and the patrol system, partly because of the

influence of West Point, which was established in 1802, and also because of a natural fondness for things military. Captain Alden Partridge, for some time superintendent of the United States Military Academy, founded the American Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy at Norwich, Vermont, in 1819. Twenty years later he founded the Virginia Literary, Scientific, and Military Institute at Portsmouth, Virginia. In that same year the Virginia Military Institute was established at Lexington and followed closely the general plan of the school at West Point. Three years later the South Carolina Military Academy was founded. Like the school in Virginia, the South Carolina institution had a very successful career during the ante-bellum period, and at the beginning of the Civil War had numerous graduates. A great many of them became officers in the Confederate Army, filling every grade from lieutenant to brigadier general, and were distinguished for their zeal, intelligence, and courage. Although the schools in Virginia and South Carolina were the most influential of all such institutions set up in the South before the Civil War, military education was very popular in that region, and academies with the military feature multiplied before 1860.

Certain interesting characteristics of the academies may be noted in conclusion. First of all they were private institutions, usually owing their origin to private enterprise and private benefaction. They were under the management and control of self-perpetuating boards of trustees, who were among the most public-spirited and progressive citizens of the community. Such schools had no outside supervision and often were laws unto themselves. The only thing they sought at the hands of the Legislature which gave them charters was corporate powers—authority to own and control property, to receive legacies and endowments, to employ and dismiss teachers, and sometimes authority was given to grant degrees or to confer distinctions and diplomas. Lottery privileges were occasionally allowed; in most cases the academies were exempted from taxation, and not infrequently the teachers and pupils were relieved from military and road duties. This type of

school went under a variety of names, such as academy, institute, seminary, collegiate institute, and sometimes the word "college" was employed. Some of them were for girls exclusively, some were coeducational, but most of the academies were intended primarily for boys and young men.

Tuition charges were universal, though frequently the acts of incorporation required indigent children to be taught free of charge in return for lottery privileges or an occasional subsidy or grant from the State. It should be remembered, however, that although the academy usually served those who were able to pay for its educational facilities, it nevertheless served the community in a larger sense. Not a few of the earlier academies were denominational in their origin, and all were more or less religious in character; in the main, however, they were noticeably free from sectarianism and from party politics. Some were so-called "fitting schools" and prepared for college, while others sought to furnish both a college preparation and a practical education. The academies belonged to no conscious educational system or organization; they were independent, more or less isolated, and frequently transient. But considering the difficulties in their way their success cannot be questioned. They appeared at a time when a large educational domain was unoccupied and would have remained unfilled but for them. They became educational centers wherever they developed, lent a broadening influence to those who could not go to college, and provided adequate preparation for those looking to collegiate training. They performed much of what is now the work of the public high school and something of what is now done in college, and often with highly satisfactory results.

The curriculum, or course of study, found in the academy often showed a wide range of subjects. The academy was intended to afford instruction in more subject matter than was offered in the old Latin grammar school of colonial times; moreover, it was designed also to meet the constantly increasing demand of those who did not seek a college training or admission into the learned

professions, and to provide for those who wanted a higher form of instruction than could be furnished by the so-called common or district school, which slowly appeared in most of the Southern States during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. The academy, therefore, took over from the Latin grammar school such traditional subjects as Latin, Greek, and mathematics, which had been favorite college preparatory subjects. Up to 1800 these were the principal subjects required for admission to the leading colleges of the country, and during the first sixty years of the nineteenth century only five new subjects appeared in the requirements for admission to college: geography, about 1807; English grammar, about 1819; algebra, about 1820; geometry, about 1844; and ancient history, about 1847. Moreover, many of the earlier academies in the South were conducted by graduates of Northern and Eastern colleges and later by graduates of the University of North Carolina, of Virginia, and of Georgia. It was natural, therefore, that the academy should seek to give preparation for college.

Since the academy not only furnished preparation for college but sought to give a practical training also, in time other subjects appeared in its curriculum. Among these were English literature, certain branches of natural sciences, history, modern foreign languages, natural and moral philosophy, ethics, psychology, geography, such forms of applied mathematics as surveying and navigation, English composition, oral reading and declamation, and commercial subjects, especially bookkeeping. One academy gave instruction in reading, writing, English grammar, geography, mathematics, Latin, and Greek in 1800; in another similar school in 1803 the boys were taught reading, writing, ciphering, English grammar, Nepos, Cæsar, Sallust, and Virgil, and the girls in the same institution were taught spelling, reading, writing, ciphering, Dresden work, tambour work and embroidery; in 1805 the principal of an academy advertised to teach, with the aid of one assistant, "belles-lettres, rhetoric, ethics, metaphysics, Hebrew, French, Italian, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, navigation,



mensuration, altimetry, longimetry, Latin, and Greek, in addition to reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and English grammar." In 1811 in another academy reading, writing, and spelling were required subjects for the girls, and Latin, French, music, painting, and needlework were elective; and for the boys in the same school there was a Latin course which included grammar, Corderii, Cæsar, Ovid, Virgil, Odes of Horace, and Cicero; a Greek course which contained grammar and the Greek Testament; a course in mathematics which required arithmetic, Euclid, and surveying; and English grammar, parsing, and geography. A teacher in North Carolina advertised in 1818 that the "following sciences" would be taught in her "female seminary": "Orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, needle-work, drawing, painting, embroidery, geography and the use of maps, also scanning poetry."<sup>1</sup>

The newer subjects were open to considerable experimentation, but certain ones became popular for good reasons. There was much practice, for example, in oral reading and declamation of masterpieces of prose and poetry and "examples of American eloquence." Patriotic selections, in which the reading books of the time abounded, were especial favorites, and an effort was made to combine interest in good reading with moral training and lessons in patriotism. Such a subject matter and such a method promised, at that time, to develop a generous enthusiasm and a wholesome and devoted American spirit which proved to be powerful influences in the early nineteenth century.

The physical equipment of the academies was in most cases far from modern, though creditable buildings were occasionally found. As a rule buildings were of wood, with an occasional brick building in the towns and more populous communities. Blackboards were rare, and modern furniture was practically unknown. Maps were now and then reported in use, and occasionally schools reported the use of globes, "geometrical

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. iv.

apparatus," "geographical specimens and a chemical apparatus," "geographical specimens and chemical apparatus," "mathematical and philosophical apparatus." The teachers were often well equipped for their work, though few if any of the earlier ones were trained professionally. Discipline was usually rigid, and instruction was remarkably thorough and not infrequently advanced for the time. In not a few cases students in some academies were adequately prepared for the junior year in the leading colleges of the country. The remuneration received by the teachers varied greatly; they were usually paid a stated salary agreed upon by the trustees and the teachers, or they received a combination of salary and tuition fees, or tuition fees only. From the evidence at hand it would appear that many of them were well paid.

Several influences of the academy movement are apparent. In the first place, colleges and higher institutions began to receive hints that they were not filling the popular needs of the time and slowly began to adjust themselves. Programs of study were enlarged by adding some of the subjects taught in the secondary schools, and tradition was otherwise broken, though the effect was not always immediate. In addition to the reaction on the higher institutions, the academy movement stimulated the training of teachers. With the so-called "revival" period, in the thirties and forties, the need for elementary teachers came to be widely and intensively felt, and the academies were looked to as the only source of supply. The academy, therefore, was the forerunner of the normal school. With the rapid growth of elementary schools in the South just before the war the argument was frequently urged that the teachers for such schools should be trained in the academies. In a few cases normal instruction was given in the academies. Closely connected with the need for elementary teachers was the growth of secondary and higher education of women, which was stimulated by the academy. Finally, many of the academies were the nuclei from which numerous Southern colleges grew.

About 1850 the academy began to decline generally on account of the development of a strong feeling in favor of public control and public support of educational enterprises. This feeling appeared first in elementary education, but finally reached the field of secondary education also. After the Civil War, when public education received a new meaning and an added impetus under the powerful influence of the Peabody Fund, the public high school in the South began to develop and soon became the dominating institution of secondary education not only for that region but for American life generally. After the war, however, and the beginning of the public high-school movement not a few of the academies which survived the educational change of the period became preparatory schools, and some became celebrated as high-class "fitting" schools for the leading colleges of the country. This change of purpose in those which did survive the war has had a tendency to obscure the important fact that in the antebellum period college preparation was not the primary purpose of the academy.

Between 1860 and 1900 the academies began to be replaced by the public high schools. This was largely an experimental period for this new type of educational institution, and difficulties in its way had to be removed. Among these difficulties was that of getting the people to accept the idea that the support of secondary education is properly a function of the State. Largely through certain social and industrial changes this idea grew in strength, and the people gradually came to see the need for materially increasing the opportunities for high-school education for the youth of the State. Since 1900 the idea of high schools at public expense has been more widely accepted, and in the entire South marked progress has been made in secondary education. The needs of this part of the public-school system of the South and some of the difficulties yet in the way of its adequate expansion and development will be considered in a later chapter.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Make a study of academies in your State with reference to (a) purpose, (b) number, (c) curriculum and equipment, (d) influence, (e) peculiar characteristics, (f) public aid, denominational interest, (g) methods of teaching, types of teachers, quality of the work done, discipline, and salaries of teachers.
2. Account for the decline of the academy movement in your State.
3. Compare the curriculum of a typical ante-bellum academy with that of a modern public high school. What peculiar advantages were afforded by the academy?
4. Make a study of public high-school facilities now provided by your State. Are public high schools of standard grade within easy reach of all the children of your county? What part of the school population of your State is attending standard high schools supported by public funds? How does your State rank with other States in this respect?
5. Compare the high-school advantages offered the children of the largest town or city in your State with those offered the children of a typical rural county of the same State. Account for the inequalities in (a) buildings and equipment, (b) number and quality of teachers, (c) courses of study, (d) length of term, (e) length of recitations, (f) library facilities, (g) literary society and club activities.
6. In what peculiar ways did the academies influence and affect secondary education in the South?
7. What lessons have the old academies for public education today? What in your opinion were the most valuable features of the academy?
8. Explain the significance of the manual-labor school movement. Account for its failure. Explain the rise of military schools.

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## CHAPTER V

### BEGINNINGS IN THE OLDER STATES

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. Before the War for Independence the conception of education as an obligation and function of the government had not gained great strength in the South. But the need for wider educational opportunity was beginning to be recognized.

2. This need was given attention by Jefferson and other leaders of the period, and with the formation of the national government a new social consciousness began to develop. Many of the States early made constitutional provisions for schools.

3. In the South the democratic theory of education was given slight impetus by the reform work of Jefferson and his coworkers, and this work later had quite a wide influence.

4. Jefferson's early work for public-school education in Virginia was not immediately successful, but it was not without influence. His school plans of 1779 and 1796 were significant, and the school law of 1818 became the legal basis of popular educational practices in Virginia before 1860.

5. Conditions in South Carolina before 1840 were not altogether unlike those in Virginia. Sectional jealousies had a retarding influence on schools. The act of 1811 formed the basis of public educational work in South Carolina during the ante-bellum period.

6. The acts of 1784 and 1822 were important legal beginnings of public-school endeavor in Georgia, and the school plan provided by the latter act continued until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. It was defective, but its inauguration marked a forward step.

7. Public education in Tennessee was closely connected with the public lands of that State. The first steps toward establishing a public-school system was taken in 1823. The school law was defective, but it served to stimulate educational interest. Slight improvements were made in 1830, and the early plans underwent many modifications later.

8. North Carolina was the first of the Southern States to have a constitutional requirement for schools and the first of all the States

to organize a university, but it was the last of the older Southern States to enact a public-school law. Local conditions delayed action. The law of 1839 was somewhat advanced and became the basis of rather creditable educational effort before 1860.

9. In general, early educational efforts in the five older Southern States were feeble. The laws were permissive and otherwise defective, and the school plans set up on them were imperfect. The South did not early commit itself fully to the principle of equality of educational opportunity, but it was able to make slightly hopeful beginnings during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Prior to the War for Independence the conception of education as a function of the State had gained only little strength in the South. Up to that time the principal educational facilities were furnished by charity schools, by private pay schools or academies (which were discussed in the preceding chapter), and by the apprenticeship system. And as few as were the opportunities furnished by these agencies, many such opportunities decreased just after the war, and education reached low ebb. This was the condition in other sections, however, as well as in the South. The growing disputes with England, their culmination in a war which left the new States greatly impoverished and depleted, and the huge debt incurred by the war left little time for attention to matters of education. Moreover, the commercial life of the South was deadened, there were internal troubles, and the agricultural conditions were primitive and unpromising. For several years following the close of the war political, social, and economic conditions were critical and discouraging. Life in the South, as elsewhere in the new nation, was full of intense struggles, dangers, and privations. Forests had to be cut, means of communication had to be established, and the first laws of nature had to be obeyed. It was before the day of inventions and labor-saving machinery, and material prosperity was naturally slow to manifest itself. The population was sparse, and few interests appeared on which community coöperation could be encouraged and promoted. The need of education, therefore, appeared relatively small as a community

interest; and the cause of education had difficulty in getting the hearing it deserved. Education was still thought of as a private matter, under the control of the family or the Church; and as a public concern it is not surprising that it was not highly regarded generally.

In spite of these facts, however, it was during the revolutionary period and the so-called "critical period" which followed that the need of schools began to be felt by those leaders who felt the force and the significance of the changed conditions. Evidence of interest in schools as a public necessity was not widespread, but it was significantly reflected during the time. Nowhere was it more striking, perhaps, than in the work of Thomas Jefferson, the great apostle of democracy. As early as 1779 he introduced into the Legislature of Virginia his famous "bill for a more general diffusion of knowledge," which not only embodied a creditable plan for a public-school system for that State but was also the first effort made for the establishment of a system of free schools in America. The first section of that bill said:

Whereas, it appeareth that however certain forms of government are better calculated than others to protect individuals in the free exercises of their natural rights, and are at the same time themselves better guarded against degeneracy, yet experience hath shown that even under the best forms those intrusted with power have, in time and by slow operation, perverted it into tyranny; and it is believed that the most effectual means of preventing this would be to illuminate, as far as practicable, the minds of the people at large, and more especially to give them knowledge of those facts which history exhibiteth, that, possessed thereby of the experience of other ages and countries, they may be enabled to know ambition under all its shapes, and prompt to exert their natural powers to defeat its purpose. And, whereas, it is generally true that the people will be happiest whose laws are best and are best administered, and that laws will be wisely formed and honestly administered, in proportion as those who form and administer them are wise and honest; whence it becomes expedient for promoting the public happiness, that those persons whom nature has endowed with genius and virtue should be rendered by liberal education worthy to receive and able to guard the sacred deposit of



the rights and liberties of the fellow-citizens, and that they should be called to that charge without regard to wealth, birth, or other accidental condition or circumstance; but the indigence of the greater number disabling them from so educating, at their own expense, those of their children whom nature hath fitly formed and disposed to become useful instruments for the public, it is better that such should be sought for and educated at the common expense of all, than that the happiness of all should be confined to the weak or wicked.

The important enactment of Congress, adopted July 13, 1787, for the government of the United States, northwest of the Ohio River, and known as the Northwest Ordinance, declared:

Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.

General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox" of Revolutionary fame, in a statement made just before his death, in 1795, on the need for popular education in South Carolina, said:

God preserve our Legislature from penny wit and pound foolishness. What! Keep a nation in ignorance rather than vote a little of their own money for education! . . . We fought for self-government; and God hath pleased to give us one better calculated, perhaps, to protect our rights and foster our virtues and call forth our energies and advance our condition nearer to perfection and happiness, than any government that ever was framed under the sun. But what signifies this government, divine as it is, if it be not known and prized as it deserves? This is best done by free schools.

Men will always fight for their government according to their sense of its value. To value it aright they must understand it. This they cannot do without education. And, as a large portion of the children are poor, and can never attain that inestimable blessing without the aid of government, it is plainly the duty of government to bestow it freely upon them. The more perfect the government, the greater the duty to make it well known. Selfish and oppressive governments must "hate the light and fear to come to it, because their deeds are evil." But a fair and cheap government, like our republic, "longs for the light and rejoices to come to the light, that it may be

manifested to come from God," and well worthy of the vigilance and valor that an enlightened nation can rally for its defense. A good government can hardly ever be half anxious enough to give its citizens a thorough knowledge of its own excellencies. For, as some of the most valuable truths, for lack of promulgation, have been lost, so the best government on earth, if not widely known and prized, may be subverted.

The Constitution adopted in 1789 for the government of the new nation contained no mention of education. But in his first message to Congress, January 8, 1790, President Washington called several interesting objects to the attention of that body. Among these were "uniformity in the currency, weights, and measures," the post office, and post roads, in all of which subjects he took a deep interest. But another subject lay equally close to his heart, and he said:

Nor am I less persuaded, that you will agree with me in opinion, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community, as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways; by convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people, and by teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority, between burdens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first and avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the laws.

These selections reflect an interesting theory of public education as held by some of the leading men of the South, and, indeed, of the entire country, following independence from England. A new

era had dawned for America. Public-spirited leaders were now beginning to look beyond local narrowness and jealousies, which had widely prevailed, and to consider the larger interests of the whole people. Lack of educational facilities for the masses began to make keen and persistent appeal to such men. Public utterances reflected the growing belief that education should be suitably and adequately provided so that the people could properly appreciate and thoroughly understand and defend their natural, civil, and political rights. Schools and the means of education were regarded as the mortal enemy to arbitrary and despotic government; they were the surest basis of liberty and equality. Moreover, they would prevent youth from acquiring "unreasonable predilections in favor of alien institutions and manners" and prejudices against those of their own country "and against the condition of society, of which their interest and duty require them to become members." Again, the education of the boys and girls of the land was necessary to produce in them an enthusiastic attachment to their own country and to insure a jealous support of its constitution, its laws, and its government. These ideals, it was urged, should be infused in every citizen from his infancy. In this respect the educational problem then was not unlike the most important task for education now, and in the experience of that period are lessons for education today.

With independence and the formation of the national government a new social consciousness began to develop. There appeared a general quickening of a new spirit which began to make itself felt in many ways. A great advance was made in denominational activity and in educational enterprises of many kinds; numerous foreign and home-mission boards were organized; theological institutions soon began to appear; new educational institutions of secondary and collegiate grade were established, and more adequate provisions were made for older ones; and organizations for promoting moral reform and social uplift were formed. These and other movements attracted attention to a large degree. A new ideal of education in a broad sense was in the making.

This new theory of education began early and grew steadily, as shown by the social movements of the half century from 1775 to 1825. But its development in the South was slow. The first significant stage in its growth, however, may be noticed in early constitutional provisions for schools and the means of education. As early as May, 1776, the Continental Congress had recommended to the various States the adoption of "such government as shall, in the opinion of the representatives of the people, best conduce to the happiness and safety of their constituents in particular and America in general." Following this recommendation, all the States except Connecticut and Rhode Island, which regarded their colonial charters adequate for the changed conditions, framed and adopted constitutions. Some of them were naturally imperfect, and revisions or amendments were soon made. All the States, however, did not make provisions for education in their original constitutions; and the lawmaking bodies in many of those States which did make such provisions did not immediately and rigidly observe the constitutional mandates.<sup>1</sup>

Of the five Southern States in the Union before 1800 North Carolina, whose original constitution was adopted in 1776, and Georgia, whose first constitution was adopted in 1777, made constitutional provisions for education. The constitution of Virginia, originally adopted in 1776, was silent on the subject of education and remained silent until 1851. The original constitution of South Carolina was adopted in 1776, another was formed two years later, and a third in 1790; several revisions or amendments were later made, but in none of these was anything said about education. The constitution of 1865, framed in accordance with the presidential plan of reconstruction, also remained silent on the subject. The first constitutional provision for education in that State did not appear, therefore, until 1868. Tennessee, admitted to the

<sup>1</sup>Those which did incorporate educational provisions before 1800 were Pennsylvania, 1776; North Carolina, 1776; Georgia, 1777; Vermont, 1777; Massachusetts, 1780; New Hampshire, 1784; Vermont, 1787; Pennsylvania, 1790; Delaware, 1792; and Georgia, 1798.



Union in 1796, made no constitutional provision for education, and none appeared until 1835. All the other Southern States, except Louisiana, made constitutional provisions for education on admission to the Union as follows: Mississippi, in 1817; Alabama, in 1819; Arkansas, in 1836; Florida, in 1845<sup>1</sup>; and Texas, in 1845. Louisiana came into the Union in 1812, but its constitution contained no educational provision until 1845. The Territory of Orleans, however, had passed some educational legislation as early as 1805; and the constitution of the Republic of Texas, in 1836, had made provisions for schools.

North Carolina was the first of the Southern group and the second of all the United States to make constitutional provision for schools. This provision, which was adopted December 18, 1776, was almost a literal copy of a section of the constitution of Pennsylvania, which had been adopted September 28 of the same year. That section, which was continued in the revised constitution of 1835, said:

That a school or schools shall be established by the Legislature, for the convenient instruction of youth, with such salaries to the masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct at low prices; and all useful learning shall be duly encouraged and promoted in one or more universities.

Georgia was the second Southern State and the third of all the States to incorporate an educational provision in its original constitution, which was adopted February 5, 1777. The provision said: "Schools shall be erected in each county, and supported at the general expense of the State, as the Legislature shall hereafter point out." Twelve years later Georgia adopted another constitution, but it contained no reference to education. A third constitution was adopted in 1798 and provided:

The arts and sciences shall be promoted, in one or more seminaries of learning; and the Legislature shall, as soon as conveniently may be,

<sup>1</sup>The constitution of Florida was framed in 1838, but the State was not admitted to the Union until 1845.

give such further donations and privileges to those already established as may be necessary to secure the objects of their institution; and it shall be the duty of the general assembly, at their next session, to provide effectual measures for the improvement and permanent security of the funds and endowments of such institutions.

These were all the educational provisions incorporated in the constitutions of the Southern States before 1817, when Mississippi entered the Union. In December of that year a constitution was adopted for that State which contained the educational provision of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and this was continued in the constitution of 1832 and of 1865 of that State. Alabama followed, December 14, 1819, with the following constitutional provision:

Schools, and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this State: and the General Assembly shall take measures to preserve, from unnecessary waste or damage, such lands as are or hereafter may be, granted by the United States for the use of schools within each township in this State, and apply the funds, which may be raised from such lands, in strict conformity to the object of such grant. The General Assembly shall take like measures for the improvement of such lands as have been or may be hereafter granted by the United States to this State, for the support of a seminary of learning, and the moneys which may be raised from such lands, by rent, lease or sale, or from any quarter, for the purpose aforesaid, shall be and remain a fund for the exclusive support of a state university, for the promotion of the arts, literature and the sciences; and it shall be the duty of the General Assembly, as early as may be, to provide effectual means for the improvement and permanent security of the funds and the endowments of such institution.

The constitution of Tennessee, which had come into the Union in 1796, contained no educational provision until March, 1835, when the following became a part of the fundamental law of that State:<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>It must not be inferred that no legislative action in behalf of education was taken in those States whose constitutions were lacking in educational provisions. Not a few States passed educational laws of one kind or another before the constitutions spoke on the subject of schools.

Knowledge, learning, and virtue being essential to the preservation of republican institutions, and the diffusion of the opportunities and advantages of education throughout the different portions of the State being highly conducive to the promotion of this end, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly, in all future periods of this government, to cherish literature and science. And the fund called "the common school fund," and all the lands and proceeds thereof, dividends, stocks, and other property of every description whatever, heretofore by law appropriated by the General Assembly of this State for the uses of common schools, and all such as shall hereafter be appropriated, shall remain a perpetual fund, the principal of which shall never be diminished by legislative appropriation, and the interest thereof shall be inviolably appropriated to the support and encouragement of common schools throughout the State, and for the equal benefit of all the people thereof; and no law shall be made authorizing said fund, or any part thereof to be diverted to any other use than the support and encouragement of common schools; and it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to appoint a board of commissioners, for such term of time as they may think proper who shall have the general superintendence of said fund, and who shall make a report of the conditions of the same, from time to time, under such rules, regulations, and restrictions as may be required by law: *Provided*, That if at any time hereafter a division of the public lands of the United States, or any of the money arising from the sale of such lands, shall be made among the individual States, the part of such lands or money coming to this State shall be devoted to the purposes of education and internal improvement, and shall never be applied to any other purpose.

The above provisions shall not be construed to prevent the Legislature from carrying into effect any laws that have been passed in favor of the colleges, academies, or from authorizing heirs or distributees to receive and enjoy escheated property, under such rules and regulations as from time to time may be prescribed by law.

After 1835, which marks the beginning of a new period in educational growth in this country, education came to be more fully and definitely dealt with in the constitutions of the various States. This change, which reflects itself in the constitutional and legislative provisions for education, was produced by the rapid growth of democracy. Before 1835 educational legislation was

couched in general and very often in vague language; afterwards, however, specific and definite terms generally characterized constitutional and legislative enactments not only on education but on other subjects as well. A remarkable interest in education began to appear in the movement known as the American educational renaissance. Those States which entered the Union after 1835, therefore, were doubtless guided by the educational experience of their older sisters and were thus greatly influenced in their formulation of educational legislation. Those of the Southern States which in constitutional and legislative action showed a response to this influence will be treated in another chapter. In the main their tendency was toward more specific and adequate educational provisions than appeared in some of the older States.

The awakening which began in the thirties owed its origin to the ideal of democracy. In the South the concept of educational endeavor as a governmental function had its beginning in the remarkable reform program which Jefferson and his coworkers launched and supported during and immediately following the Revolution. Although at first a movement of a local character, certain phases of the work of these Virginia reformers were far-reaching in their influences. Their program, which was led by Jefferson, consisted of a series of measures which formed a system on which a true democratic form of government could be established. Chief among these measures was the divorce of the Church and the State and the establishment of the rights of conscience, the abolition of entail and the law of primogeniture, the revision of the laws, and the celebrated movement for a school system.

The influence of the Church in Virginia was briefly noted in Chapter II. It remains to be noted here that the Establishment was finally weakened by a series of legislative enactments dealing with the religious question and by its attempt to controvert an evangelical movement which had spread from England and had awakened a popular emotion and reached a class of people hitherto



not influenced by the Establishment. These enactments began with the bill of rights, which contained a "broad declaration of religious liberty" and pronounced "a decree of absolute divorce between Church and State,"<sup>1</sup> and were demanded by the petitions of hundreds of dissenters who had grown impatient at the legal restrictions placed on them. By the repeal of the law which imposed penalties for nonconformity and for failure to support the Establishment, which was achieved after twenty-five days of heated debate in 1776; by gradual concessions made to the liberal party up to 1786, when the famous act establishing religious freedom was passed; by the defeat of the movement for general assessment and the repeal, in 1787, of the incorporation act, thus making all churches "independent of the civil power, as to doctrine, discipline, and means of support"; and finally by settling, in 1802, the question of the ownership of the glebes and other church property, the last vestige of the Established Church in Virginia was destroyed. Persecution for religious causes ceased and religious qualifications for civil office were abandoned.

Another blow which Jefferson and his reforming party struck was aimed at the system of entail and is said to have been an avowed blow at the aristocracy. By abolishing entail, lands and slaves were to be held in fee simple and could be sold for debt; and the accumulation and perpetuation of enormous wealth in a few families, who had monopolized the civil honors of the colony, were prevented. Thus the whole system of laws and usages which were designed to prevent a distribution of wealth crashed almost in a day. The abolition of primogeniture and the unequal distribution of inheritances followed as a twin measure and made possible the equal distribution of property among heirs, thus removing feudalistic and dangerous distinctions.

A complete revision of the laws, including British usages and colonial enactments from 1619, was also a part of the reform program. "The laws of Virginia were a chaos of obsolete and

<sup>1</sup> Eckenrode, Separation of Church and State in Virginia.

antiquated enactments, good for lawyers, bad for clients." The revision was finally completed in 1779, and the revised measures were presented in more than one hundred clear and definite bills. These were taken up separately and acted upon one by one, and during the next six or seven years were enacted into law.

Jefferson's great faith in the mass of the people made him an untiring supporter of popular education. He believed that the people were capable of self-government, that they meant well, and that they would act well whenever they understood. He was eager to enable them to understand by education and training and accordingly introduced his famous school bill into the Virginia Legislature in 1779.

The plan proposed was based on Jefferson's political theory of local self-government. It provided for a division of the counties into "hundreds," of "such convenient size that all the children within each hundred may daily attend the school to be established therein." The electors of each such division were to select the site for the schoolhouse, which was to be built and kept in repair by the three county aldermen, who were to be chosen by the qualified electors of the county. At each school "all the free children, male and female, resident within the respective hundred, shall be entitled to receive tuition gratis, for the term of three years, and as much longer, at their private expense, as their parents, guardians, or friends, shall think proper." The subjects of reading, writing, and common arithmetic were to be taught from books which would at the same time acquaint the children with Greek, Roman, English, and American history. An overseer "eminent for his learning, integrity, and fidelity to the commonwealth" was to be appointed annually by the county aldermen to superintend "every ten of these schools." His duties were to appoint teachers, to examine the pupils, and to visit and have general control over the schools. The salary of the teacher and all other expenses connected with each school were to be provided by the hundred "in such manner as other county expenses are by law directed to be provided."

In order "that grammar schools may be rendered convenient to the youth of every part of the commonwealth" the various counties were to be districted, two or more counties forming one district. In each district a grammar school was to be established and equipped with one hundred acres of land, a brick or stone house, with necessary offices, "a room for the school, a hall to dine in, four rooms for a master and usher, and ten or twelve lodging rooms for the scholars." The expense of establishing and equipping these schools was to be paid out of the public treasury. Latin and Greek, English grammar, geography, and the "higher parts of numerical arithmetic" were to constitute the curriculum. A visitor from each county composing the district was to be appointed by the overseers, with powers over the grammar schools similar to the powers of the overseers over the primary schools, and, in addition, "to settle the price of tuition to be paid by the scholars." Every overseer of the elementary schools was to select from among the boys who had spent two years at one of the schools under his direction, "one of the best and most promising in genius and disposition . . . without favor or affection," who was to be educated and boarded at the grammar school of his district for one, two, or more years, according to his "genius and disposition." Those whose parents were too poor to give them further education were, however, to have preference. The most promising ones of those who were advanced through the grammar schools were to be "educated, boarded, and clothed, three years" at public expense at William and Mary College, which was also to be improved and enlarged.

The strong features as well as the weaknesses of this plan are obvious to the modern student of education. It shows the influence of the educational ideas of certain French revolutionists whom Jefferson greatly admired, and was very advanced for the time. Had it been adopted a highly creditable public-school system would have been set up in Virginia before 1800. The Legislature did receive the plan with some interest, but never acted on it. The confusion of the times and the heavy expense which the

proposed system would have involved helped to work its defeat. The matter of determining the schools proposed was to be in the hands of the landed gentry, who were already provided with private schools and did not keenly feel the need of the system proposed. Therefore they were not likely to tax themselves for schools which they would not patronize. Moreover, the absence of a strong middle class to support it helped to bring failure to the plan.

These early educational labors of Jefferson were not lost, however, even though they were not immediately successful in Virginia. The subject of education there and elsewhere began to receive careful attention, and Jefferson's zeal in its cause never flagged. Moreover, the Legislature frequently gave attention to proposed educational legislation, which showed his influence and the influence of the bill of 1779.

The State seemed to hang back from adopting any practical educational plan, however, until 1796. In that year an act was passed, to go into effect January 1, 1797, which in the main embodied Jefferson's original plan; and although it, too, was of a permissive and discretionary character, nevertheless its passage was very significant in the educational growth of that State. The lofty words and sentiment of its preamble were characteristic of educational writings of the time:

Whereas it appeareth that the great advantages, which civilized and polished nations enjoy, beyond the savage and barbarous nations of the world, are principally derived from the invention and use of letters, by means whereof the knowledge and experience of past ages are recorded and transmitted, so that man, availing himself in succession of the accumulated wisdom and discoveries of his predecessors, is enabled more successfully to pursue and improve not only those acts which contribute to the support, convenience, and ornament of life, but those also, which tend to illumine and enable his understanding and his nature.

And whereas, upon a review of the history of mankind, it seemeth that however favorable republican government, founded on the principles of equal liberty, justice, and order, may be to human happiness,



no real stability, or lasting permanency thereof can be rationally hoped for, if the minds of the citizens be not rendered liberal and humane, and be not fully impressed with the importance of those principles from whence these blessings proceed: With a view, therefore, to lay the first foundations of a system of education, which may tend to produce these desirable purposes, Be it enacted by the general assembly, etc.

The plan proposed by this act was worthy and somewhat advanced for the time and contained the elements of a thorough free-school system for the white children of the State. But it was weakened by a clause which left the entire matter discretionary with the county courts to say when the proposed school system should go into operation in the various counties. Moreover, each county was to provide for the expense of its own schools. The greater burden of educating the children of the community would have fallen, therefore, on the wealthier part; and since the county magistrates were usually wealthy country gentlemen, it is not amazing that the plan was not adopted in any county and that the law soon became a dead letter.

In spite of the appeals of certain public-spirited leaders who urged attention to the subject, nothing further was achieved for public education in Virginia until the creation of the literary fund in 1810. Educational sentiment was developing slowly, and the establishment of this public-school endowment somewhat stimulated interest in schools. During the next few years attention was called to the educational needs of the State, and the Legislature was urged to remove this "reproach to our public spirit." The literary board reported a school plan in 1816, and a bill conformable to it was presented to the Legislature and passed the House, but failed in the Senate. Virginia again missed the opportunity of inaugurating a plan which contained the principles of a fairly adequate and complete system of education.

Although the cause of public education was again defeated the agitation for schools did not cease. At the meeting of the Legislature in December, 1817, Governor Preston urged attention to

this great object, saying, "Give to all, rich and poor, equally the means of instruction." By this time the literary fund was generally considered large enough to yield an income sufficient to render considerable educational service. The problem now seemed simplified; and an act was passed February 21, 1818, to appropriate a part of the revenue of the literary fund for the education of poor children. This act was the basis of the so-called "pauper" school system of Virginia, which continued throughout the antebellum period.

Under the provisions of this law the sum of \$45,000 was to be appropriated annually from the income of the literary fund, to be distributed to the counties, cities, and towns on the basis of their free white population. The county courts were to appoint school commissioners (varying in number according to the size of the county), who were to determine the number of poor children for whom their quota of the annual appropriation would afford instruction. Each commissioner was to select as many poor children, with the consent of their parents or guardians, as he thought expedient. These were to be placed in such schools as were convenient, and arrangements were to be made with the teachers for instructing them at a definite rate, usually three or four cents, for each day such children were in actual attendance. The children were to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic; and the expenses of their tuition and of their books and writing materials were to be paid out of the county quota of the annual appropriation. The commissioners were to make annual reports to the literary board, giving the number of poor children in the county, the number in school, the cost of their tuition and supplies, and such other facts as would show the operation of the system. The same law created the University of Virginia and appropriated from the literary fund the sum of \$15,000 for its support.

Thus, after an agitation which extended over nearly forty years the Old Dominion in a small measure committed itself to the theory of public schools. But the act passed in 1818 was de-

fective in principle and was only a feeble acceptance of Jefferson's educational idea. In the main, however, it continued the principal legal basis of popular educational practice in that State throughout the ante-bellum period. The actual operation of the plan thus created and subsequent efforts for educational improvement in Virginia will be treated in another chapter.

Actual educational conditions in South Carolina before 1840 were in many respects very similar to the conditions in Virginia during that time. The theory of education was practically the same in both States; the constitution of each State was tardy in making educational provisions; educational interests in each were left to the whims of the Legislature, which was often indifferent and at times hostile; and each State early inaugurated a school plan for the less prosperous part of its population which was so defective in principle as practically to work its own defeat. In provisions for school support, however, the two States differed somewhat. The support of schools in Virginia came from the income of the permanent public endowment created in 1810; while South Carolina, which had no such public fund until after the Civil War, supported its so-called free schools during the ante-bellum period by annual legislative appropriations. In South Carolina, however, evidences of educational interest appeared early, although there, as in Virginia, local difficulties continued obstinate and greatly hindered a satisfactory growth of educational opportunity.

One of the difficulties was sectional jealousy in the State. The lower section of South Carolina was wealthy and cultured, many of its citizens having been trained in the North or in Europe; while the upper section was the more populous, but deficient in education and wealth. The members of the House of Representatives were apportioned on the basis of wealth rather than on that of population; and as its wealth increased, the people of the upper section of the State demanded a more equitable share in governmental affairs. The people of the lower section were not willing to place the affairs of the State in the hands of the

uneducated, "and wisely concluded that it was best to afford the means of improvement, until they were fitted to assume control."<sup>1</sup>

The organization and work of certain societies (see Chapter II) had served as steps to this end and had influence in uniting the two sections of the State. But jealousy continued. In the Legislature of 1801, when the South Carolina College was established, there was sharp opposition, which persisted for some time; and the following year the Legislature received from the upper section two petitions urging that the act establishing the college be repealed. This sectional jealousy was among the causes which prevented South Carolina from establishing before the Civil War a system of schools commensurate with its needs and resources. Nor did the plan adopted during the ante-bellum period meet the expectations of its creators. But the subject of popular education early claimed serious attention and was agitated widely and continuously before 1860. One of the early significant statements on the need of schools appeared in the *Charleston Courier* in 1803: "We see great incomes wasted, great grandeur in equipage . . . but we do not see the country studded up and down with those precious jewels of a State, *free schools*." And in his message to the Legislature in 1811 Governor Henry Middleton said:

I cannot suffer the present occasion to pass, without bringing to your view the propriety of establishing *free schools*, in all those parts of the State where such institutions are wanted; there can scarcely be a difference of opinion of the advantages which a country must generally derive from the instruction of its people; but one of the first objects of a government, founded on popular rights, should be to diffuse the benefits of education as widely as possible; and to enlighten and inform the whole mass of that people, whose collective will controls and directs the energies of the country. A system of general instruction is essential to the preservation of our political institutions. Your liberal support of the South Carolina College, a monument of your veneration for science and learning, testifies your anxious solicitude to secure to our youth the highest advantages of instruction, and doubtless that

<sup>1</sup> Meriwether, *History of Higher Education in South Carolina*, pp. 133, 134.



seminary will yield annually on accession of able and virtuous citizens to the State; but those alone whose affluent circumstances have enabled them to pass through certain preparatory studies, can enjoy the benefit of that institution; it is now hoped that you will employ some portion of your funds in procuring the elements of education for the children of indigent persons. Reading, writing and arithmetic, are highly essential to those children who must owe their advancement in life to their industry; and while they are acquiring the keys of knowledge, their hearts may be formed to a proper sense of moral and religious excellence. To every real philanthropist, this must be an object of great interest, when it is considered that the diffusion of useful knowledge has ever been found the means of correcting the propensity of vice, and of diminishing the number of crimes.

Petitions for free schools were presented to this Legislature from citizens of the districts of Fairfield, Chester, Williamsburg, Darlington, Edgefield, Barnwell, York, St. Stephen's, St. James's, Santee, St. John's, Colleton, and St. Peter's, and these were referred, together with the governor's message on the same subject, to the proper committees. A joint committee on education was appointed from both Houses, and early in December it regularly reported a bill to establish free schools throughout the State. The bill passed the Senate without a roll call and the House by a vote of seventy-two to fifteen. This act, which seems to have been designed as the initial movement to create and set in operation a school system which would furnish elementary instruction to all the children of the State, not only was the basis of the only school plan attempted in South Carolina before 1860, but, with the exception of an act passed in 1835, was the most important legislative enactment for schools in that State throughout the entire ante-bellum period.

The law provided for the legislative appointment, one every three years, of a board of school commissioners for each election district, the size of the board depending on the size of the district. This board was to establish in each district of the State as many schools as it had members in the House of Representatives, and in the administration of his duties each commissioner was to be assisted by three trustees for each school. The commissioners

were to determine the location of the schools ; to examine, appoint, and remove teachers ; to admit pupils, the local trustees making recommendations regarding their fitness ; to have general supervision over all free-school interests in their districts ; to draw on the treasurer of the State for the amounts due teachers, naming each one and giving the number of his school, his division in the district, and his time of service ; and to make annual reports of school statistics to the Legislature. Each election district was to receive for free-school support the sum of \$300 annually for every representative it had in the Legislature. The schools were to be free to all citizens of the State, but if more children should apply for admission than could be accommodated preference should be given to poor orphans and the children of indigent parents. This provision proved to be the chief defect of the plan. The original purpose of the law and of the system which it created was to furnish a substantial English education to all the children of the State, but in spite of its purpose the plan came early to be regarded as merely for the poor and was so regarded throughout the ante-bellum period.

Until a sufficient number of schools could be set up the officials were empowered to convert those which were begun into "moving schools," if by this means the purposes of the act could be better promoted. Moreover, the law recognized the existence of other schools in the State :

In all districts where a school or schools are already, or may hereafter be established by private funds or individual subscription, it shall be lawful for the commissioners of the free-schools, at their discretion, to unite such part or parts of the fund provided by this act for such district with such school or schools, in such manner as may appear to them best calculated to promote the objects of this act.

The act of 1811 remained practically the only legislation on the subject of free schools in South Carolina, with the exception of a supplementary act passed in 1835 and occasional resolutions of the Legislature. The law of 1835 was in principle the same as that of the original law except that it provided for imposing

penalties on the commissioners for failure to perform their duties. In spite of this provision, however, these officers were frequently careless and indifferent, and the penalties prescribed were rarely imposed. The school plan thus provided by these two acts was defective in principle, but it remained the basis of all that was accomplished for public-school education in South Carolina before 1860. The operation of the system and the attempts to bring about educational reform during that period will be discussed in another chapter.

No Southern State began its career as a member of the Union with more promising educational prospects than Georgia. Though the youngest of the original colonies it was among the first of the States to make constitutional provisions for education (see page 119), and its early efforts signalized the purpose of inaugurating an educational policy which would doubtless have closely approximated the ideal of Thomas Jefferson if the liberal ideas of the framers of the State could have been followed.

Among the earliest recorded opinions on the subject of education in Georgia after the Revolution was the message of Governor Lyman Hall in 1783, when he urged the Legislature to enact such laws as would encourage the cultivation of the principles of religion and virtue "among our citizens." To this end he recommended the endowment of seminaries of learning by sufficient tracts of land to support "such valuable institutions"; and this suggestion of land grants as endowments of educational institutions in the State proved to be the first step in the establishment of numerous academies and of the state university. Acting under the mandate of the constitution and in accord with the suggestion of Governor Hall, the Legislature in July, 1783, passed a law which chartered academies in three counties in the State and gave them landed endowments and empowered the governor to grant one thousand acres of land for the establishment of a free school in each of the other counties. During the next several years practically all the educational legislation enacted in the State showed interest in the academies or the university.

Perhaps the most significant piece of educational legislation in Georgia during the early years of statehood was the act of chartering the university of the State. This was passed in February, 1784, and created a college or seminary of learning and endowed it with forty thousand acres of land, thus giving to Georgia the distinction of having chartered the first state university in the United States. In January, 1785, an act was passed for a "more full and complete establishment of a public seat of learning."

Under the law enacted at this time the educational interests of the State began on a most promising plan, the purpose being to unite all literary concerns and provide for them in common. All phases of public education in the State were to become a part of the university, whose "senatus academicus" was required to act in an advisory capacity toward all public schools instituted or "supported by funds or public moneys in this State." Such schools were regarded as parts of the university; they were to be directed and regulated by it, and the president of the university was to visit them regularly and examine into their work. The plan was remarkable for its centralization, but it was impracticable for the time and the conditions with which it had to deal. The county academies were few and scattered, and the spirit of the time was not one which looked with great favor on centralization of authority. The result was that the plan of making the university the central educational authority of the State failed except in name.

From the establishment of the university until 1817 there was but little public educational effort in the State except legislative encouragement of academies and of the university. The academies grew rapidly and, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, received liberal legislative support. So-called elementary schools, however, were not receiving any encouragement from the State, probably for the reason that more than ordinary attention was paid to schools which were thought to be of an academic grade. But sentiment in favor of public elementary



schools was slowly growing, and although the idea of charity entered early into all efforts of the State to provide elementary education and persisted throughout the ante-bellum period, yet a beginning was made of a plan which finally afforded considerable instruction to a class which otherwise would have been entirely neglected educationally.

With the passage of the act of July, 1783, the genesis of the so-called "poor school" system of Georgia was made, though the plan contemplated in that legislation did not become sufficiently formulated to be put into operation until more than thirty years later. A wholesome educational sentiment was in the making, however, during that time. In his message to the Legislature in November, 1816, Governor D. B. Mitchell said :

What a weight of obligation does not our present happy and enviable situation impose upon us, to cherish, support and maintain, our invaluable constitution in its present shape and form. Let us jealously endeavor to discharge this obligation by all the means in our power. It has been often said, and I think truly, that knowledge is one of the surest means by which liberty is either to be obtained or preserved ; and that knowledge which is improved, enlarged and refined, by a liberal education, is undoubtedly the best. If we turn to the historic page we shall find, that all those nations which encouraged and patronized learned men, and institutions for the education of their youth, were the most free, and if for a time they fell under oppression, they seldom failed to embrace the most favorable opportunity to break the fetters, and re-establish their freedom. . . .

Our State has in this respect done much, but she ought still to do much more. Thirty years' experience has proved that the legislative provision for the establishment and support of our county academies, is altogether insufficient : but few of them have gone into operation, and those that have, it is well known have been greatly aided by individual patronage. The great increase of our territory and population, and the inadequacy of the fund heretofore appropriated for this purpose, seems to me to require further legislative provision.

It is highly gratifying to witness the individual efforts now making in many parts of the State, for the establishment and support of private schools and academies ; and will the Legislature of Georgia refuse to

encourage and promote such laudable exertion? Surely they will not . . . Enlighten the rising generation and their liberties will be secure—leave them in ignorance and they may be made slaves.

Largely as a result of this message and a growing sentiment in favor of providing educational facilities, there was enacted in December, 1817, an act which gave substantial impetus to the free-school idea. Under authority of this legislation the sum of \$250,000 was appropriated by the Legislature to be set apart for the "future establishment and support of free schools throughout the State," and the governor was empowered to invest that sum in bank stock or other profitable stock. The following year certain lots in each surveyor's district in the counties of Appling, Irwin, Early, Walton, Gwinnett, Hall, and Habersham were reserved for the education of poor children. This remained the principal educational legislation in the State until December, 1821, when another act was passed dealing with free schools. This law, "for the permanent endowment of county academies," set apart the sum of \$500,000 to be equally divided, one half for the support of free schools and the other half for the "permanent endowment" of county academies. This legislation marks the origin of the harmful distinction made between the academy fund and the "poor school" fund which persisted for so many years in Georgia. The greatest immediate influence of the law was doubtless the stimulation of academies. During the next decade more than one hundred academies were chartered—three times as many as had been chartered during the preceding forty years. During the decade from 1830 to 1840 this number more than doubled.

The next significant legislation dealing with public elementary instruction was passed in 1822. By act of December 23 of that year the justices of the inferior courts were to appoint one or more "fit and proper persons" in their respective counties to superintend the education of the poor children. These officers were required to enumerate and make a list of all poor children

in their counties and return their names to the county justices, who were to examine and certify the same and deliver the list to the governor. The justices were not allowed to return the name of any child whose parent or estate paid a "tax exceeding fifty cents" above the poll tax. The governor, under the act, was to distribute the sum of \$12,000 of the bank dividends and other proceeds of the "poor school" fund among the various counties in proportion to the number of the poor children returned by the justices, and the money was to be paid to "such persons as the inferior court may empower to receive the same." It was the duty of the persons so appointed to cause "any of the poor children so returned to go to school at such schools as may be convenient in their respective neighborhoods." Each teacher instructing such children was required to present his account to one of the justices of the county, who was required to have "the same paid where it shall appear just." However, no child was to be instructed at the expense of the fund who had already "been taught reading, writing, and the usual rules of arithmetic." Moreover, no child under eight or above eighteen years of age could participate in the benefit of the fund, and none could be sent to school at public expense more than three years. The census required by the law called for the enumeration of children "as well poor as rich, and female as well as male" between the ages of eight and eighteen years. The justices were required to make a report to the "senatus academicus" of the university "of their actings and doings," to accompany such report with such remarks as they thought proper to make concerning the utility of the plan, and to suggest any other plan which they considered "likely to produce the benefits intended."

This legislation became the real basis of elementary educational practices in Georgia before 1860. In none of the laws described, however, is there any evidence that the establishment of special schools was contemplated for the instruction of poor children, and it does not appear that any were established. Teachers in the academies or in "inferior or elementary" schools

already in operation who were willing to comply with the few simple formalities of the law and to undertake the work received for instruction those children of the community who, in the opinion of the justices, came within the meaning of the law. Such children were entered with such teachers, who received their share of the fund apportioned for the purpose of educating the poor children of the State. In December, 1823, the act of the previous year was altered, and provision was made for the annual distribution of \$20,000 from the income of the poor-school fund among the counties of the State in proportion to their free white population, for the purpose of educating indigent youth.

The plan thus provided for public elementary education continued until the late thirties. Like the plan in Virginia and in South Carolina it was inherently defective, and throughout its long life its principle was attacked as unwholesome in that it served to accentuate invidious distinctions in the public mind. However, its inauguration marked a step, however feeble, in the direction of one correct principle of public education—that of state support. Here the State appeared partially committed to that principle, although its application was not to all the community, but rather to the less prosperous part. Moreover, while it was defective in principle and of unwholesome influence in its operation, the plan yet placed the crumbs of elementary instruction within reach of hundreds of poor children whose intellectual lives would otherwise have remained entirely unnourished.

No further important legislation was enacted for public-school education in Georgia until 1837. In that year a thorough public-school system for all the youth of the State was set up, to be supported by a combination of a large school fund and a permissive county tax, but the plan thus provided was shortly replaced by the original plan. Other more or less successful attempts were later made to improve the public educational conditions in the State, but the plan of 1822, in the main, continued until the Civil War. The actual operation of this plan before 1860 as well



as the legislative attempts at improvement during the ante-bellum period will be treated in a later chapter.

It was noted in the preceding chapter that the history of early educational effort in Tennessee was closely connected with the history of public lands in that State. It was also pointed out that North Carolina (from which State Tennessee was settled near the middle of the eighteenth century) ceded to the Federal Government in 1790 all the lands in the region now known as Tennessee, that Tennessee was organized as a territory in 1794 and admitted to the Union as the sixteenth state in 1796, and that the Federal Government retained until 1806 the lands which had been ceded by North Carolina. In 1802 Ohio had been admitted to the Union and had received from Congress the sixteenth-section school-land grant, but similar provision was not made for Tennessee until 1806. In that year, however, some educational provision was made in the requirement that the State should, "in issuing grants and perfecting titles, locate 640 acres to every six miles square in the territory hereby ceded where existing claims will allow the same, which shall be appropriated for the use of schools for the instruction of children forever."

There was an important difference, however, between the educational provision thus made for Tennessee and that made for Ohio by the land grants of Congress. The sixteenth-sections in Ohio had been definitely located by the admirable survey system of the Federal Government, but Tennessee was not divided into the six-miles-square townships, and it was difficult to locate the sections designed for school purposes. Moreover, there had been a steady stream of immigrants into the region for many years, and the settlers had acquired valid claims to a large part of the land which, by the act of Congress in 1806, was intended for school support. These pioneers naturally resisted all efforts which were made to take their lands for the purposes of that act, and considerable confusion resulted. As early as 1806, however, legislation was enacted by the State

directing a survey and division of the newly acquired territory into tracts "as near six miles square as the case will admit," and six hundred and forty acres of land "fit for cultivation and improvement" were to be located in each tract for the use of schools. With the passage of this act confusion began because, with the first efforts to comply with its provisions and the provisions of the act of Congress, the settlers began to resist, and difficulties growing out of the situation perplexed the Legislature many years. It should be kept in mind that the title to these lands in Tennessee was vested in the State and not in the township or district.

The land office was opened in 1807, and for nearly two decades the school lands were leased by commissioners appointed by the county courts. But it soon became apparent that although the land provisions for schools seemed munificent they were, in fact, entirely inadequate for maintaining a system of schools which would furnish without cost to the people the benefits of education to the children of the State. Moreover, the lands had not been properly protected, and the Legislature rejected the governor's recommendation in 1821 that steps be taken to acquire full information on the subject. Sentiment in favor of more adequate educational provisions was growing, however, and in September, 1823, Governor William Carroll said, addressing the Legislature:

The subject of education has often been recommended, and its claims to the fostering care of the Legislature cannot be too strongly urged. Our colleges and academies have languished for the want of those funds so essential to their prospects and usefulness. A strong and very laudable desire seems generally to be manifested, that we should not be dependent upon the literary institutions of our sister States for the education of our sons. We have the means, and it is only necessary that they should be brought into action, and Tennessee will soon be as distinguished for her literary attainments as she has been for the defense of her rights. The durability of our government will much depend upon the information of its citizens, which cannot be attained by all, unless the means are brought within the reach of all.

Then talents will be brought from obscurity, and the son of the poorest man in the community may be qualified for usefulness and the highest office in the State. The subject demands your peculiar attention, and its importance is its highest recommendation.

It was in that year that the first step was taken toward the establishment of a public-school system. Legislation was enacted by which offices were established for receiving entries for vacant lands north and east of the congressional reservation, the lands to be entered at the price of twelve and a half cents an acre, and the proceeds to be paid quarterly by the entry clerks to certain banks which were designated for the purpose. The funds arising from this source were to "remain and constitute a perpetual and exclusive fund for the establishment and promotion of common schools in each and every county in the State." By the same act taxes on these lands became a part of the public-school fund, to be kept separate and paid over to the proper bank or banks, whose agents were to make a semiannual distribution of these sources of school support among the school commissioners, who were provided for by the same act. There were to be five of these officers in each county, to be named by the county court. Up to this point the law had creditable features, but, like early legislation in the States already discussed, it was defective in one very vital point: the county school officials were to appropriate the funds received under the provisions of the act "to the education of the poor, either by establishing poor schools in their different counties or by paying the tuition of poor children." Thus another lawmaking body, by the unnecessary use of an unfortunate adjective, at the outset limited the usefulness of what was obviously intended as the beginning of a creditable school system and, by recognizing class distinctions, discouraged the patronage of the schools by all classes.

Although defective, this act of 1823 served a good purpose in that it helped somewhat to stimulate a better educational sentiment. The people had been dissatisfied with the land provisions

for education, and in 1824 the Legislature made complaint to Congress. The complaint was accompanied by a statement in a report which was made by James K. Polk, who was at that time one of Tennessee's congressmen. The statement showed that the schools of the State were entitled to 444,000 acres of lands, that only about 22,700 had been laid off, that all the good lands were occupied, and that the remaining lands were not very valuable. An appeal was made to Congress to make up the deficiency from the unoccupied territory of the congressional reservation, but no relief was given. The subject of public schools was receiving increased attention during these years, however, and there was promise of action which would promote the cause. In an address to the graduating class at Cumberland College in October, 1826, President Phillip Lindsley voiced a growing sentiment in favor of public education when he said:

Common schools, then, are needed in Tennessee. How shall they be established? Let the people decide. What character and form shall they assume? Let every county be divided into such a number of school districts or departments as will conveniently accommodate all the inhabitants. Erect comfortable and commodious schoolhouses. Attach to each schoolhouse a lot of ten acres of land, for the purpose of healthful exercise, gardening, farming, and the mechanical arts. For the body requires training as well as the mind. Besides, as multitudes must live by manual labor, they ought betimes to acquire habits of industry, economy, temperance, hardihood, muscular strength, skill, and dexterity. [President Lindsley was not unlikely interested in the manual-labor school. See Chapter IV.] Employ teachers to govern and instruct children in the best possible manner. Pay them according to their merit. Pay any sum necessary to command the services of the best and most accomplished teachers. Parsimony in this particular is not only impolitic; it is mean, it is absurd, it is ruinous. Better have no teachers, than to have incompetent, immoral, lazy, passionate, or indiscreet ones, however cheaply they may be procured. Their influence will not be merely negative; it will be positive and most powerful. I have often looked with horror upon the kind of common schools and teachers to which thousands of children, during several of their best years, are cruelly and wantonly



subjected in the older States. But it is or was the fashion, in many places, to hire a blockhead or vagabond, because he would teach a child for a dollar and twenty-five cents a quarter. Now if there is anything on earth for which a parent ought to feel disposed to pay liberally, it is for the faithful instruction of his children. Compared with this, every other interest vanishes like chaff before the wind—it is less than nothing. And yet, unless the world has suddenly grown much wiser, there is no service so grudgingly and pitifully rewarded. The consequence is what might have been expected. Every man of cleverness and ambition will turn his back with scorn upon the country school. He will become a lawyer, a physician, a merchant, a mechanic, a farmer, or a farmer's overseer, in preference. Until school-keeping be made an honorable and a lucrative profession, suitable teachers will never be forthcoming in this free country.

In 1827 the Legislature passed an act for the purpose of consolidating all school funds into one fund to encourage and support public schools in Tennessee. Among the funds appropriated by this act for school purposes were the proceeds from land sales in the Hiawassee District, all lands previously appropriated in the State for the use of schools, all the unappropriated lands to which the State had at that time or should later acquire title, the rents and profits of all school lands accrued but unappropriated, the funds provided for in the act of 1823, the proceeds of intestate estates, and several other items. This act was the real legal basis of the State's permanent public-school fund, which will be treated in the following chapter. The act was defective in neglecting to make provisions for the application of the fund thus created, but an effort was made two years later to correct this defect.

By 1830 the school fund was thought to be large enough for beginning a school system, and legislation was enacted establishing the first public-school plan of the State. The law provided that the court of each county should at its first session in 1830, and every year thereafter, appoint one commissioner in each captain's company, and these commissioners were to meet at the regimental muster grounds and divide the "said regiment into school districts." In each district five trustees were to be elected to serve

for one year or until their successors were elected. These local officers were to organize into a board and to choose from among themselves a chairman, a clerk, and a treasurer; and the chairmen so chosen were to meet at the courthouse at a specified time each year and select not less than five nor more than seven "discreet and intelligent" citizens for county common-school commissioners. These commissioners were to meet twice a year and were to have charge of all school funds. All interest due the county from the school fund, the taxes on school lands sold, and all the other taxes, fines, or contributions directed by law to be paid to the county commissioners constituted a fund for annual distribution among the school districts in proportion to the number of children in each between the ages of five and fifteen years.

The district trustees were to provide a comfortable schoolhouse before the district could participate in the annual distribution of the fund. It was also the duty of each local trustee to "open and keep a subscription paper and solicit and receive donations which shall be appropriated to the school of the district." The local trustees were to employ teachers and to "judge of their qualifications, capacity, and character," and to report annually to the county school commissioners the teacher's salary, the school term, the enrollment, the subjects taught, "and the average price given for tuition each month per scholar." The trustees were also authorized to induce all children between the ages of five and fifteen years to be sent to school, "and no distinction shall be made between rich and poor, but said school shall be open and free to all." The trustees were to have "full power to guard the morals, manners, and habits of the scholars" and to expel any scholar when in their opinion "the good of the school requires it." Authority was also given the trustees of any district which was not able to continue a school for the entire year to arrange to keep it open at "the most leisure season of the year, and at such time as will be most convenient for the children of the neighborhood to go to school." The county school commissioners were required to visit the schools at least once a year and "examine into the

situation and condition of said schools, and the progress the scholars are making, and the branches taught." They were allowed also to appropriate twenty dollars a year from the school fund for purchasing schoolbooks and writing materials for the children of poor parents.

In a measure the provisions of this law were more or less advanced for the time. However, the act was defective in at least two points: in its failure to provide for stimulating local initiative in the matter of school support and in the provision that books should be furnished poor children. This element of charity engendered prejudice against schools supported at state expense—an attitude which persisted for decades and did not entirely disappear until many years after the Civil War. The system established in 1830 underwent many modifications and several improvements before 1860, however, and by that date contained several features of an adequate public-school plan. The actual operation of the system from 1830 to 1860 will be discussed in another chapter.

North Carolina incorporated provisions for education in the original constitution of that State in 1776. The university was established in 1789 and organized six years later, but with this exception no legislation was enacted in behalf of public education until 1825, when the literary fund was created. With the exception of this act it was nearly fifty years from the organization of the university to the passage of the first public-school law in 1839. North Carolina, therefore, was the last of the older Southern States to enact a public-school law.

There were many conditions which prevented an earlier obedience to the educational mandate of the constitution. Leaders in the State believed in the civilizing influences of schools and colleges, but the terms of the constitution itself were more or less uncertain and variously interpreted by those who really had an earnest interest in promoting the cause of public schools. To some the constitutional provision meant that the Legislature should establish public free schools and provide for their maintenance by state taxation, while others believed that it was intended to give

authority for legislative aid to private schools and academies. This latter interpretation was so general that frequent petitions were presented to the Legislature for the aid of such schools, but they were invariably refused; and in 1803 a bill for establishing an academy in each district, to be maintained by the public, was also defeated. Another condition which hindered legislative action was the fear of taxation, inherited perhaps from colonial days. Taxation, it was argued, was designed in a republican form of government to defray its legitimate and necessary expenses, and the less the tax the more ideal the government. Such a theory naturally stifled the proper conception of education in a democracy. Moreover, the intrusion of the State into the parental obligation was considered by some as dangerous and agrarian. To others the element of charity read into a public-school system seemed humiliating—an attitude which cooled local pride and community patriotism. Besides, lack of communication between the eastern and western counties produced sectional jealousies which unhappily prevented the development of a common educational interest. The entire absence of proper qualifications and a resulting lack of professional spirit among the teachers of the State also delayed the beginnings of a movement for popular education. Compared with many other pursuits, teaching was popularly considered contemptible.

Agitation of a movement for public schools, however, began early after the opening of the national period. From 1802 to the passage of the first school law the various governors and other leaders urged the Legislature to obey the constitutional requirement and to provide educational facilities for the masses of the people. In 1804 Governor James Turner advocated public taxation for school support and urged the introduction of a school system which would "extend itself to every corner of the State." In 1815 Governor Miller, like his predecessors, urged the establishment of a school system and said that it was "under the hand of legislative patronage alone that the temple of science can be thrown open to all." Beyond referring the executive



recommendation to a joint committee of the body, however, which was the first committee on the subject of education appointed in the Legislature of the State, no action was taken. The following year the same executive called attention to the subject again and recommended the establishment of a permanent school fund: "The example set in a neighboring State, in establishing funds for the advancement of literature and internal improvements, seems well worthy of imitation."<sup>1</sup>

That part of the governor's message was referred to a committee, of which Archibald D. Murphey was named chairman, and the result of the committee's work was a report, written by Murphey, in which the democratic theory of education was thoroughly elaborated. The report pointed out that the education of the youth of the State was then left to chance and that thousands of children were growing up in ignorance. It urged that the strength of the State resided in its people, who should be educated at public expense without distinction of class, and stated that the Legislature was amply able to appropriate half a million dollars for maintaining a general system of schools. In conclusion Murphey recommended the appointment of a legislative committee of three to digest a system of education based on the general principles of the report and to report it to the next session of the Legislature. Murphey was again appointed chairman of the committee, and in November, 1817, presented to the Legislature the report which gave him the name of the "father of the public schools of North Carolina."

The report was significant in that it marked the dawn of a new educational era for North Carolina and became the basis of the school system which was inaugurated in 1839. It was presented after a careful study of the best systems of education in this country and in Europe and embodied the best of the practicable features revealed by the investigation. The proposed system was to include a literary fund; a state board of education to manage the fund and to have supervision over the schools; provision

<sup>1</sup>Virginia had established a literary fund in 1810.

for a state university, academies, and primary schools, their organization and administration; and provision for the education of the poor and for an asylum for the deaf and dumb. The plan considered primary schools of first importance.

Although somewhat advanced for the time the report did not fully accept the democratic theory of education. Its recommendation of provisions for the education of the poor reflects an attitude which was prevalent even among the most public-spirited men of the period:

One of the strongest reasons which we can have for establishing a general plan of public instruction, is the condition of the poor children of our country. Such has always been and probably always will be the allotment of human life, that the poor will form a large portion of every community; and it is the duty of those who manage the affairs of a State to extend relief to this unfortunate part of our species in every way in their power.

The proposed plan met the hearty support of the Legislature, which prepared and presented a bill based on the recommendations. But the impracticable feature of attempting to maintain as well as to educate the children of the poor, and the burdens of the war debt of 1812, were among the factors combining to defeat the scheme, which embraced the profoundest and most comprehensive educational wisdom ever presented for the consideration of a North Carolina Legislature. The friends of the proposed plan were unwilling to eliminate the impracticable feature, and legislative enactment of the bill proved an impossibility.

Although this attempt to establish schools failed, agitation of the subject did not cease. Governor Branch, in his message to the Legislature in 1818, referred especially to the "solemn injunction" of the constitution and reminded that body that "by this chart we are bound, as the servants of the people under the solemnities of an oath, to steer the vessel of State." At that session of the Legislature efforts were again made to establish a school system in the State. The proposed law empowered the county courts to appoint "five persons of competent skill and

ability" to have direction of school affairs in the various counties. Three local trustees, to be appointed by these county directors, were to employ the teacher and "designate such poor children in their neighborhood as they shall think ought to be taught free of any charge." These poor children were also to receive free books and stationery. The expenses of the schools were to be borne by a property tax of ten cents on the hundred dollars' valuation and a capitation tax of fifty cents, to be levied in each county. Each teacher was to be paid an annual salary of one hundred dollars from the county funds and also receive two thirds of the money collected from tuition. The bill passed its first reading in both Houses and passed its second reading in the Senate by a large vote, but on its second reading in the House it was postponed indefinitely.

In 1819 and in 1822 the matter of education was again before the Legislature. In the latter year Governor Gabriel Holmes urged legislative obedience to the injunction of the constitution to establish schools and said: "I fear, gentlemen, if those venerable fathers were to rise from their tombs, they would reproach us with supineness and neglect, and would not listen to our plea of want of power. We shall never know what power we have until we exert it." In 1824 an attempt to create a permanent fund for school purposes failed by vote in the lower branch of the Legislature. The proposed plan looked principally to making provision for the education of the poor children of the State. The following year further effort was made, and interest in a plan for schools was widespread. At that time Governor Burton declared that education was more important than internal improvements, a subject which had largely absorbed legislative consideration for nearly a decade. A plan for a general system of schools, in most respects similar to previous plans suggested, was reported. Its most interesting feature, however, was the provision for taxation for school support, and this meant immediate death to the plan. A few days later an attempt was made to create a school fund by means of a lottery, but this likewise met

defeat. Finally, a bill, which was drawn by Bartlett Yancey, a former student of law under Murphey, was presented to the Senate and provided for establishing a permanent public endowment for school support. It passed regularly through the usual channels of legislation and became law without a division in either House of the Legislature.

The adoption of a constitutional provision for schools was the first victory for education in North Carolina. A more signal victory was won, however, with the enactment of legislation creating a school fund, and with it the initial step was taken by the Legislature in obedience to the constitutional mandate. Hostility to increased taxation had been intense, and the passage of a measure calling for local or county taxation for school support would have been impossible. If schools were to be created, provision for their maintenance had to be sought in other ways than by taxation, and the creation of a permanent public fund from the income of which schools were to receive aid seemed the only satisfactory plan. This method of school support had already been adopted in several other States.

No legislation of special educational importance was enacted during the next ten years, though the subject of schools continued to be agitated, and repeated efforts were made to secure educational improvement. During these years of fruitless effort the population of the State was increasing, with the result that the children of the masses were growing up in ignorance. There seemed to be no voice to speak out and to point the way to correct educational action. Sentiment for public education was also developing and expressing itself. Surprise was frequently expressed in the press of the State and elsewhere "that a subject so interesting to every philanthropist, so superlatively important in a political point of view, and so loudly and imperiously demanded by existing circumstances in our State, should have continued so long without attracting the special attention and engaging the active exertions of our Legislature. . . . The dullness and incapacity which is permitted to enter our legislative hall, and



disgraces us even in the national representation . . . evinces most unequivocally the mental debasement of a large portion of our population."

The education of the masses was believed to be the only correct basis of agricultural and commercial prosperity and the surest guaranty of liberty. Dr. Joseph Caldwell, president of the state university, said, in an address before a convention in Raleigh in 1829, that the State was three centuries behind in education, the chief cause of which he declared to be the "fatal delusion" that "taxation is contrary to the genius of a republican government." The following year Governor Owen attacked the State's so-called policy of economy as fit only to keep "the poor in ignorance and the State in poverty." And in 1833 Governor Swain spoke of the "apathy which has pervaded the legislation of half a century."<sup>1</sup>

There were a few evidences of a growing sentiment in favor of education, however, in the thirties. One appeared in a movement to organize the teachers of the State through the formation in 1832 of "The North Carolina Institute of Education." Two annual sessions of this organization were held in the interest of schools. Public interest during this time was also stimulated by the well-known letters on popular education addressed to the people of the State by President Caldwell of the state university. These letters were eleven in number and were the result of the work of a standing legislative committee appointed several years before for the purpose of studying conditions in the State with a view to improvement. The committee never met, but the letters of Caldwell thoroughly embodied that educator's views on the subject of public education and created a wholesome interest in the cause. They pointed out the difficulties in the way of educational advancement, suggested plans for overcoming the State's educational backwardness, discussed the usual methods of school support, remarked freely on educational practices in the State, discussed the public-school systems of other States, and pointed out those features which would be practicable for conditions in

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. vii.

North Carolina. Provision for training teachers was regarded as a necessary feature of any system which the State should adopt, and a thorough plan for a school in which such provision could be made was considered in detail. The demand for schools would then increase and "the walls that shut in our people from the light of day" would be broken down.<sup>1</sup>

Certain social and economic conditions during these years had produced a general feeling of uncertainty and depression, with the result that progressive policies of internal improvements and education were difficult to formulate and execute. These conditions had variously revealed themselves. In 1790 the State ranked third in population among the states of the Union, ten years later it had declined to fourth place, and by 1830 to fifth. Moreover, the value of lands was on the decrease. In 1815 land values were greater than in 1833, although a million acres had been entered by the latter date. Slaves were increasing faster than the white population; emigration continued a persistent and alarming problem, thousands of people leaving the State every year in search of better opportunities; and the want of better commercial interests closed the avenue of trade to a people almost entirely agricultural, proving a most serious impediment to social progress. The report of the committee on internal improvements in 1833 recited many of these conditions and discussed the inauguration of a policy by which the evils which resulted from the previous policy of the State could be cured.

During the next few years the subject of schools continued to be agitated. The literary fund was not considered large enough to support an adequate school plan for the State. Several suggestions were made through committee reports and legislative resolutions, but proposed legislation was defeated. At the session of the Legislature in 1836-1837 a memorial was presented from

<sup>1</sup>These letters appeared in the *Raleigh Register* in 1830 and are given in full in Coon's "Public Education in North Carolina, 1790-1840. A Documentary History." Copious extracts from them may also be found in the author's "Public School Education in North Carolina," chap. vii.

citizens of Fayetteville, who "witnessed with pain and mortification the depressed condition which each section of our State presents, when compared with that of her sisters of our happy Union"; and Governor Dudley, in his inaugural address, said:

As a State, we stand fifth in population, first in climate, equal in soil, minerals, and ores, with superior advantages for manufacturing and with a hardy, industrious, and economical people. Yet with such unequaled natural facilities, we are actually least in the scale of relative wealth and enterprise, and our condition daily becoming worse—lands depressed in price, fallow and deserted—manufacturing advantages unimproved—our stores of mineral wealth undisturbed, and our colleges and schools languishing from neglect. . . .

It was said that there were then in the State fully one hundred and twenty thousand children between the ages of five and fifteen who were "destitute of a common-school education. In some parts of the State many large families are found not one of whom, parents or children, can read their alphabet; and in others whole neighborhoods of forty or fifty families exist, among whom but few individuals can read their Bible." From press and pulpit the need for schools and increased facilities for education was being discussed, and the whole subject was becoming more and more absorbing in its interest.

Several important educational steps were taken at this session of the Legislature. One of these was the plan adopted for disposing of the surplus revenue distributed by act of Congress in 1836; another was the passage of a law which vested certain swamp lands in the literary board and appropriated the sum of \$200,000 for their drainage and improvement; and still another, equal in importance to these, was the direction given to the literary board to digest a plan for a State school system and to report the following year. The principal of the literary fund was thus greatly increased, with a resulting expansion of its revenues. The share of North Carolina in the surplus revenue from the Federal Government amounted to \$1,433,757.40, all of which was

eventually applied directly or indirectly to the cause of education. In this way the literary fund was increased to nearly two million dollars, and steps were at once begun for launching a system of public schools.

In his message to the Legislature in 1838 Governor Dudley urged the establishment of a school system and the employment of a state superintendent. Several resolutions were passed in favor of the subject early in the session, and the literary board, in accordance with instructions of the preceding Legislature, submitted a plan for a school system. The report of the board was extensive and detailed and suggested provisions for common schools "suited to the conditions and resources of the State." On this report the first public-school law of the State was ratified, January 8, 1839, and became the basis of a creditable ante-bellum educational system.

The law provided for an election in every election precinct in the State to ascertain the voice of the people on the subject of schools and on raising by local taxation one half the amount to be given by the literary fund for school support. Boards of school superintendents, from five to ten in number, were to be elected by the county courts for those counties which voted for schools. Each board so elected was to organize and to divide its county into school districts and to appoint local trustees for each district. The county court was required to levy a tax of twenty dollars for each district which voted for schools, in the same manner that other taxes were levied for county purposes. This amount was to be doubled by an appropriation from the income of the literary fund. The local district was required to erect a schoolhouse sufficient to accommodate fifty children and to levy the local tax before it could receive this appropriation.

An educational campaign which revealed a widespread and wholesome sentiment in favor of schools was waged in the spring and the summer of 1839. The subject was discussed by public leaders and the friends of education, and the press of the State generally urged the school tax provided for in the law. The



election was held in August, and a majority of the counties adopted the plan, approving the principle of school support by a combination of local taxation and the income from the literary fund. The plan failed in seven counties, however, four in the western and three in the eastern part of the State. But the long agitation for schools had passed, and the State was now ready to begin a noteworthy educational career.<sup>1</sup> The operation of the system from 1840 to 1860 will be treated in another chapter.

From this brief and general study of early educational effort in the older Southern States two important questions at once suggest themselves: Why were these States only partially committed to the principle of equality of general educational opportunity and slow to make adequate school provision for the children of all the people? and Why were the early school laws in these States so permissive and vague and the school plans set up on them so defective?

It should be kept in mind that the immediately important changes which appeared with the War for Independence were largely political, that many of these were at first theoretical only, and that corresponding social changes did not appear promptly. In many ways the people continued to live and to work as formerly. They continued to be absorbed in satisfying material needs. For many years following the war many of them lived under primitive frontier conditions. For a long time there was a lack of easy means of communication, the population continued sparse, and lack of the township government system such as prevailed in New England denied to the people wide, direct, and close participation in local affairs. The average man was not able to express his opinion or desire on local community needs and interests such as schools, as he is permitted to do today. And, then, as now, the successful promotion of public schools depended on a wholesome social consciousness, which has always depended for development of the right and the opportunity of the individual to express opinion and desire on social needs. Without these

<sup>1</sup>Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. viii.

privileges a sound sense of the common welfare cannot be created and developed. Moreover, for several decades following the war the political leaders were responsible for new and increasing governmental affairs and were thus kept busy with duties and interests which were immediately pressing and seemed more important than schools.

The religious motive for schools as an individual necessity was slow to give place during the early years of national life to the political motive, which, in theory at least, had been given force by the declarations that men are created equal and endowed with "certain inalienable rights." The principle of equal political opportunity among men was in time to be accompanied by the closely related principle of equal educational opportunity. But this companion principle was slow to appear in practice. Education, therefore, was to be looked upon for some time not primarily as a public concern but as a private interest. There remained wide confidence in private schools among the more prosperous part of the people, and among the less prosperous part there was contempt for "free" education because it smacked of charity. It was to be many years, therefore, before the principle of educational opportunity, equal and free to all, should gain wide and full acceptance. The practical application of Jefferson's theories on education was not to be gained rapidly or to meet with full recognition promptly. And at best it was only natural that in the South early school laws and the school plans set up by them were to be colored largely by an aristocratic conception which was out of harmony with the promising and hopeful principles of equality declared in 1776. In these conditions may be found the causes which delayed the rapid and wholesome growth of public-school education in the older Southern States.

Hopeful beginnings had been made, however, in these States by the dawn of the so-called American educational renaissance in the thirties. Permanent public-school endowments were created in all of them except South Carolina, and in all some form of educational legislation was enacted. Most of such legislation was

defective in principle, however, and provided for school systems which were defective in plan and organization. But generally throughout the South during the half century following independence there appeared genuine interest in schools as a public necessity. Hope was thus reflected for the average man and his children not only in political but in educational and social matters. Gradually new demands were made for provision to educate the common people, because a free government required free schools for its success. If liberty and security were to be preserved a general diffusion of knowledge was necessary. Public opinion needed to be enlightened, and this could be done only through education afforded the masses of the people.

Early efforts to these ends were naturally crude and imperfect. In the main educational legislation contained the element of charity which persisted as a retarding influence in the South for many decades. Through it class distinctions were recognized, and a powerful prejudice was thus created against public schools. The right of local initiative was not generally established and, except in North Carolina, no provision was made for stimulating local enterprise and community patriotism by requiring some form of local taxation for school support. For a beginning had been made, feeble though it was; and under the influence of the revival during the second quarter of the nineteenth century notable improvement in public education was to be made. This was to be promoted also by the influence of permanent public-school endowments, which will be treated in the following chapter.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Trace the growth of education as a concern of the government in your State.
2. What educational influence appeared in your State as a result of the American Revolution?
3. Why did the conception of education as a private or religious obligation persist after the organization of the national government?

Explain why a wholesome educational consciousness depended on the growth of a keen national consciousness.

4. (a) Make a study of Jefferson's educational philosophy. (b) What were its strong points? (c) In what way or ways were his school plans defective? (d) Explain the fact that although Jefferson conceived education as an obligation and proper function of the government, he adhered to the principle of local control rather than to that of control by the State. (e) What lessons have his theories of educational control for those interested in public education today?

5. What arguments for public education were made by the political leaders during the early years of the national period? Compare those arguments with the arguments advanced today for an extension of public educational effort.

6. Make a study of the constitutional and legal provisions for education in your State. Trace the changing conception of education as shown by the messages of the governors and expressions of private individuals and of the press.

7. Why were the Southern States slow to make adequate provision for the public education of all the people? Point out the educational influence of economic, social, and political conditions of the South during the first forty years of national life.

8. What effect did the tendency toward religious freedom have on public education in the early national period? Explain the larger interest in secondary schools and colleges than in elementary-school systems in the South during the first three or four decades following independence.

9. Make a study of the various conditions which affected public education during the early years of our national life and contrast them with conditions today.

10. Explain how the element of charity became attached to the early educational efforts of the various Southern States. To what extent has your State fully accepted in practice the principle of equality of educational opportunity for all the people?

11. Make a study of any educational leaders in your State prior to 1835 and account for their positions on the subject of public-school support. How much were their views influenced by local political matters? Explain the sectional jealousies that grew up in most of the older States.



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## CHAPTER VI

### PERMANENT PUBLIC-SCHOOL FUNDS

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. In spite of indifference and open hostility the free-school idea has grown until it is today generally accepted as sound.

2. Changes in public sentiment and the growth of correct principles of public educational endeavor were stimulated in a measure by the creation of permanent public-school endowments.

3. Although such endowments were important stimuli to educational development, considerable carelessness and mismanagement marked their early operation.

4. Tennessee was the first of the Southern States to create a permanent school fund, and from it annual appropriations were made for free-school support.

5. Virginia was the second Southern State to establish such a fund. It assisted in supporting schools for poor children throughout the ante-bellum period.

6. South Carolina established no permanent fund before the Civil War.

7. Georgia was the third Southern State to establish a permanent school endowment. It was used almost exclusively to aid the education of indigent children.

8. Similar funds were set up in Mississippi in 1821 and in North Carolina in 1825.

9. The distribution of the surplus revenue in 1837 stimulated public education by increasing permanent school endowments.

10. Permanent school funds were likewise established in Alabama, in Arkansas, in Texas, in Florida, and in Louisiana, and contributed largely to ante-bellum school support in those States.

11. Losses were incurred by the school funds in most of the Southern States before the Civil War. That struggle and the devastating period of reconstruction which followed also caused such funds to lose heavily. Since 1875 most of the Southern States have reëstab-

lished the funds of the ante-bellum period. Those funds are now more carefully managed and are serving to promote public education in a variety of ways.

The public-school idea is today so universally accepted that it is difficult to believe that it has developed through opposition and struggle or that any other educational theory ever found widespread support in so-called democratic communities. But wholesome sentiment on the subject of public education has undergone remarkable changes during the past century. Early in the nineteenth century the attitude of the public was indifferent and often hostile to the principle of public schools for all the people. At that time schools and the means of education at state expense were rare, and taxation for educational purposes was everywhere difficult to levy. Efficient state supervision and control, now rapidly reaching a desirable form in the Southern States, was then practically unknown; laws which were intended to encourage free schools were permissive and difficult to enforce; the income from endowments created to assist in supporting free schools was frequently used for other than educational purposes, and not infrequently the endowment itself was mismanaged and exploited for private ends. Indifference, contempt, and open hostility were some of the obstacles confronting the early movements for public free-school systems.

In spite of these obstacles, however, the free-school idea has gradually developed, and two important educational principles which are present in every sound and adequate public-school system have slowly but steadily grown. The first of these is the democratic principle that education is the function of the State rather than a family or a parental obligation and that the responsibility of providing the means of education rests primarily with the State. The other principle is that the State has the right and the power to raise by taxation on the property of its members sufficient funds for adequate school support. Both of these principles are now generally accepted in all the Southern States, though here as elsewhere they have won acceptance in the

face of such bitter opposition and cold indifference that their period of intense struggle is now not only difficult to recount but even more difficult, perhaps, to realize.

This change in sentiment and the growth of these important educational principles were in a measure produced by the establishment of permanent public-school endowments, popularly known as "literary" or "school" funds, the income from which was designed for public-school support. This form of public educational support assisted in fostering and encouraging the growth of the present conception of education as a public concern and duty, and in nearly every State in the Union the public-school system was begun and set in motion by this method of financial support. Moreover, no feature of the public-school systems of the United States has rendered greater or more lasting service than permanent public-school endowments in destroying opposition to taxation for school purposes, in developing a wholesome educational sentiment, and in stimulating local initiative and community enterprise. Historically, therefore, the origin, development, and influence of public-school funds have a place in any account of educational growth in this country.

Several purposes or incentives led to the establishment of permanent endowments for public schools. Notwithstanding the conditions which early opposed free schools, public sentiment was never unanimous against them. In most communities there were always a few public-spirited citizens who looked with favor on the public-school idea and believed that the encouragement of public education was both a necessity and a rare opportunity for promoting an intelligent and happy citizenship. Such leaders regarded it a duty to make provision for public schools; but the discharge of such a duty called for funds, and there was almost everywhere a dominating sentiment against taxation for anything except the necessary expenses of government. Schools were not yet properly considered a state obligation, and permanent endowments showed promise of furnishing greatly needed assistance. This seems to be the oldest aim or incentive



for establishing a permanent public-school fund and is illustrated by the act of 1795, which established such an endowment in Connecticut. But the result was unexpected and unwholesome: the fund failed to make the schools free; the increase in its income gradually checked the tendency to raise local school taxes; and from 1821 to 1854 practically the only sources of school support in that State were the income from the school fund, gifts, and rate bills, which were not abolished until 1868.

Other States learned by Connecticut's costly lesson. It was clearly demonstrated that an endowment should not entirely relieve a community from local school burdens, but should stimulate and encourage local effort for school support. Any other principle would not only be a moral injury to the community and to the cause for which the fund was provided but would mean death to the cause of schools if the people were entirely relieved of all responsibility of assisting in their support. Therefore another aim in establishing school funds was to encourage local taxation. The earliest example of this principle is found in the case of New York, where it was never contemplated that the fund, established in 1805, should yield sufficient revenue entirely to support the schools. The principle here adopted was that of local taxation, and before a community could participate in a distribution of the revenue of the fund an amount equal to its share had to be raised by local levy. This principle has been most generally accepted as the soundest and most stimulating to the cause of adequate school support and, with certain modifications, soon came to be widely adopted in the United States. North Carolina seems to have been the first of the Southern States to adopt this principle in the distribution of income from its ante-bellum educational endowment.

In spite of their importance as stimuli to educational growth, the record of the amazing carelessness and gross indifference with which public-school endowments have been managed is one of the most lamentable and melancholy chapters in American educational history. This record was practically universal in the

pioneer days before education had won its proper place in public interest. Educational funds were then rarely guarded with the jealous care which their importance and sanctity demanded. The careless manner in which they were handled, moreover, showed the indifference which confronted the early movement for public schools.

Few if any of the States entirely escaped from the evils of mismanagement and the exploitation of public-school funds. The tendency toward careless management appeared early and continued for many years, more rigid control by additional legislation proving but little insurance against loss. Among the recorded causes of loss may be seen almost every species of violation of public trust. In some cases the school funds were grossly and shamefully diverted from their original purposes; in other cases their management was indifferently intrusted to incompetent officials, and the result was unwise investments; in still other cases loans were insufficiently secured and interest was often defaulted; and dishonest management and embezzlement by officers intrusted with the care of school funds caused other losses. Happily, however, there are but few gross examples of this form of loss. The most flagrant case is perhaps found in Tennessee, where Robert H. McEwen, the first superintendent of public schools in that State, succeeded in the late thirties in using a large part of the school fund for private purposes. Failures of banks in which school funds were invested, the use of the school funds for meeting the current expenses of the state government, and the repudiation by the State of debts due the school funds were other forms of wrongs committed against public education.

Tennessee was the first of the Southern States and the fourth of all the States to make provision for establishing a permanent fund for aiding public education. By act of 1806 it was ordered that the new territory, acquired by act of Congress in the same year, should be surveyed and laid out into tracts six miles square and that six hundred and forty acres of land "fit for cultivation

and improvement" were to be "appropriated for the use of schools for the instruction of children forever." This legislation conformed to the requirement of the act of Congress which ceded certain public lands to Tennessee. A land office was soon opened, and the school lands were leased by commissioners appointed by the county courts; but it soon became apparent that these legislative provisions were not adequate to maintain a school system without cost to the people.

Nothing further was done to promote the cause of school support, however, until 1823, when offices were created to receive entries for vacant lands north and east of the congressional reservation line. These lands were to be entered at a certain price, and the funds thus arising were, together with state taxes on these lands, to be set aside as a "perpetual and exclusive fund for the establishment and promotion of common schools in each and every community in the State." The same act provided for county school commissioners, to be appointed by the county courts, who constituted the principal administrative officials of the system. These officers were to receive the semiannual distribution of the means of school support thus provided and were to appropriate the funds "to the education of the poor, either by establishing poor schools in their different counties or by paying the tuition of poor children." These acts of 1806 and 1823 were followed in 1827 by legislation which consolidated all school funds into one fund to be used for "the encouragement and support of common schools forever."

In the early thirties further legislation was enacted in an effort to increase the fund, but no other very important steps were taken. In 1835 Tennessee adopted its first constitutional provision for schools, which provided that the "common school fund" and all other property which had been set aside for public-school support should remain a "perpetual fund." The principal could not be diminished by legislative appropriation, and the interest was to be inviolably appropriated to the support and encouragement of common schools in the State and for the equal benefit of

all the people. The constitution also provided that no law should ever be passed authorizing a diversion of the fund or any part of it to any other purpose or use than that of the support and encouragement of common schools. Further requirement was made that the Legislature should appoint a board of school commissioners to have general control of the fund, and by an act of February, 1836, provision was made for these officers. Provision was also made for a state superintendent of public instruction, who was to be chairman of the board, the other members of which were the treasurer of the State and the comptroller of the treasury. The board was empowered to appoint county agents throughout the State to have control of renewing securities and receiving funds due the board. As rapidly as the common-school fund increased it was to be invested in the Planters' Bank at Memphis. One of the superintendent's most important duties was to act as financial agent of the fund.

In 1836 the Legislature took steps to provide for accepting the State's share of the surplus revenue of the Federal Government, which amounted to \$1,433,757.40, and at the next session of that body a policy was adopted for disposing of both the federal fund and the permanent public-school fund. The plan agreed upon was the result of prolonged consideration given to the subject of schools and school funds, which began at the early part of the session and continued until the passage, in January, 1838, of an important educational act. This act created the Bank of Tennessee, which was the third bank in the State to bear that name, and capitalized it at \$5,000,000. The capital was to consist of the permanent school fund, the share of the surplus revenue to which the State was entitled, and any unexpended interest thereon, the proceeds of the sale of certain lands, and loans sufficient to bring the total amount up to \$5,000,000. The same act provided that \$100,000 from the dividends of the bank should be paid annually to the board of school commissioners for common-school support and that \$18,000, from the same source, should be paid annually for the support of academies. By later legislation, however, this



source of school support was to be turned into the state treasury, to be kept as a separate fund but to receive the same protection as other funds of the commonwealth.

It was the Legislature of 1837-1838 which became suspicious of the superintendent's management of the school fund and ordered him to report certain facts, "setting forth clearly the amount received by him, . . . by whom paid, and from what sources received." McEwen's business methods between 1836 and 1838 had aroused sufficient suspicion to call for legislative investigation, and a committee was appointed for that purpose. The result was a majority report that, by mismanagement and a variety of questionable schemes, the superintendent had succeeded in robbing the school of more than \$121,000. Suit was later instituted against him and his securities, and as a result of the litigation the matter was finally compromised by a legislative committee, the defendants paying less than \$10,000 in full settlement of all claims.<sup>1</sup>

The policy adopted in 1838 continued as the method of managing the fund until the war. The annual appropriation from the treasury consisted of the interest on the fund and was distributed among the counties of the State on the basis of their scholastic population. This revenue furnished to each child of school age from forty to fifty cents a year, which constituted practically all the funds for public-school support until 1854, when Tennessee made its first provision for taxation for schools. This provision practically doubled the available funds for public education. The chief defect of the permanent fund was lack of centralization in its management. In spite of the weakness, however, the endowment rendered substantial aid to educational effort for many years.

Virginia was the second of the Southern States and the fifth of all the States to establish a permanent public-school fund. This action was taken in 1810, when a law was passed directing that "all escheats, confiscations, fines, penalties and forfeitures,

<sup>1</sup>Weeks, *History of Public School Education in Tennessee*, chap. iv; Whitaker, "The Public School System of Tennessee, 1834-1860," in *Tennessee Historical Magazine*, Vol. 2, No. 1.

and all rights in personal property accruing to the commonwealth as derelict, and having no rightful proprietor" were appropriated to the encouragement of learning. The auditor was directed to begin an account to be known as the literary fund, and a year later an act was passed which made provision for the education of the poor by defining the purpose of the fund and planning for its management by a board composed of state officers. The same act stipulated that as soon as "a sufficient fund shall be provided for the purpose, it shall be the duty of the directors thereof to provide a school or schools for the education of the poor in each and every county of the commonwealth." The law entered a solemn protest against the application of the fund by any future Legislature to any other object than the education of the poor.

The fund grew slowly at first. In 1816 it was increased by a large sum due Virginia for certain reclamations for military services in the War of 1812, and shortly afterward the annual income was considered large enough to render substantial assistance to free-school support. In 1818 an act of the Legislature appropriated the sum of \$45,000 annually from the income of the fund for the education of poor children.

This amount continued to be appropriated for that purpose until 1850. The following year the constitution of the State was revised, and provision was made for applying to primary and free schools one half of the capitation taxes which the revised constitution required. Two years later all the capitation taxes were appropriated to educational purposes. From 1851 to 1854 the annual appropriation for free-school support was \$75,000, and from 1855 to 1860 the appropriation was increased to \$80,000. At the outbreak of the war the permanent available capital of the literary fund was \$1,877,000, which was yielding a fair return. In that year the total expenditures for the tuition and books of poor children and for the compensation of school officials were \$190,000. Of this amount the sum of \$80,000 came from the income of the permanent fund and the remainder from the capitation taxes.

From 1818 to 1860 the income from Virginia's permanent public-school fund was applied almost exclusively to the education of the poor, except in a few communities where the so-called free-district system had been adopted and where there was a surplus beyond the actual necessities of poor children, in which case the county authorities could transfer such surplus to any incorporated college or academy in the county. Such transfers were not frequently made, however, if at all. Moreover, the literary fund belonged to all the people of the State, and the question was asked, "Is it right to take the property of the many and bestow it exclusively on the few?" This method of distribution seemed the chief defect of the fund, though this was not its only weakness. Fully one fifth of the capital of the fund was reported lost on account of poor management and poor investments and by debts due from defaulting officers. More than \$382,000 was lost in these ways by 1856. Of this amount the sum of \$59,090.52 was lost during the early life of the fund. Constant accumulation of funds in the treasury, which should have been invested for school purposes, was another criticism of the endowment. Moreover, fully 40 per cent of the resources of the fund was not directly applied to the purpose for which it was intended.

South Carolina was the only Southern State which did not provide a permanent public-school fund before the Civil War and was likewise the only State in the South to support its antebellum public-school system entirely by annual legislative appropriations. On this subject several writers have fallen in error by stating that South Carolina established a school fund in 1811. Among the earliest errors was one which appeared in Barnard's *American Journal of Education*, in 1873, Vol. XXIV, p. 317. A. D. Mayo made a similar mistake in the Report of the United States Commissioner of Education for 1894-1895, Vol. II, p. 1507. Boone, in his "Education in the United States" (1893), p. 86, and Dexter, in his "History of Education in the United States" (1904), p. 204, were led into the same error; and Swift, in

his "Public Permanent Common School Funds in the United States" (1911), says, "South Carolina appears to have established a permanent school fund in 1811, but little, if any, reliable information concerning it has been available." Elsewhere the same writer says of the subject, "Complete and reliable data not available" (pp. 98, 389). A careful study by these writers of the logical sources of information would have rendered a happy service to later students of the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Georgia was the third Southern State to create a permanent public-school fund. As early as 1783 the governor recommended to the Legislature that seminaries of learning be given land endowments, and this suggestion proved to be the first step in the establishment of academies and of the state university. In July of that year endowments of lands were given to academies in three counties of the State, and the governor was given power to grant one thousand acres of land as an endowment for free schools in the other counties. The following year the state university was chartered and endowed with forty thousand acres of land. Nothing was done for public-school education, however, until 1817, when the sum of \$250,000 was set apart for establishing and supporting free schools throughout the State; and to that end the governor was empowered to invest the sum in bank or other profitable stock. In 1818 lots No. 10 and No. 100 in each surveyor's district in certain counties were set apart for the education of the poor children, the proceeds from the sales of such lands to be kept as a permanent fund for that purpose. In 1821 the sum of \$500,000 was set apart for the permanent endowment of county academies and for increasing the funds which had already been appropriated to encourage and support free schools. At the same time a similar amount was appropriated for internal improvements in the State.

The act provided that the \$500,000 to be known as the school fund was to be composed of \$200,000 of stock in the Bank of

<sup>1</sup> See Knight, *The Influence of Reconstruction on Education in the South*, chap. iv.



Darien, the same amount of stock in the state bank, and \$100,000 of the stock in the Bank of Augusta. These sums were to be used for no other purpose than that of the school fund, and the interest was to be applied only to education. The state treasurer, comptroller general, trustees or commissioners of the county academies, and the inferior courts of the various counties, together with the senators of the counties, were required to examine and make full and accurate reports to the Legislature of the amounts received by the counties in confiscated property or other endowment; and when such information was obtained, the dividends yielded by half of the fund set apart by this act were to be apportioned and paid semiannually to the various counties, as the Legislature should direct, for the support of academies. The dividends yielded by the other half of the endowment were to be used for free-school support. One of these endowments came to be known as the academy fund, the other as the "poor school" fund, and this distinction persisted for many years. Up to 1829 the sum of \$60,000 was appropriated from the former and \$46,000 from the latter for the support of academies and of public schools, respectively.

When Georgia received its share of the surplus revenue of the Federal Government in 1837, which amounted to \$1,051,422.09, one third of the amount was appropriated for educational support, and a joint legislative committee of five members was appointed to digest and report a school plan for the State. The report was made, and as a result an act was passed in 1837 by which the academy and the "poor-school" funds were consolidated and, together with the \$350,000 of the surplus revenue, a general free-school fund was constituted. In 1838 legislative provision was made for a county tax for school purposes, to be added to the common free-school fund. But by an act of 1840 the acts of 1837 and 1838 were repealed, and all school funds were merged into a "poor-school" fund, which remained the chief means of public educational support in Georgia until the reorganization period following the Civil War.

The annual income from this fund from 1840 to 1860 was designed for encouraging and supporting free schools, but the plan under which this financial assistance was administered was very unpopular, with the result that there was widespread indifference on the subject of public schools. However, between \$30,000 and \$40,000 seems to have been annually distributed from the endowment for free-school support, though the appropriation was often rejected because participation in the benefits of the fund was a confession of pauperism. This attitude toward the "poor school" fund was produced by the principle of distribution, which offered educational aid to only a portion of the people. This principle operated in several of the Southern States before 1860 and aroused criticism of and outright hostility to so-called public educational effort. In Georgia the criticism was as general and as intense as elsewhere. "Poverty, though a great inconvenience, is no crime," said Governor William Schley, in 1837, "and it is highly improper, whilst you offer to aid the cause of education, to say to a portion of the people, 'you are poor.' Thousands of freemen who, though indigent, are honest, patriotic, and valuable citizens, will refuse your bounty and despise the hand that offers it, because it is accompanied with insult."

Mississippi was made a territory of the Union in 1803 and comprised most of the region south of Tennessee and west of Georgia to the Mississippi River. In 1817 it was made a State, and the act admitting it contained the provisions of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, that the sixteenth section of every township should be set apart and reserved for the support of schools and that an entire township should be reserved for the support of a seminary of learning. At the first Legislature of the State, in 1818, an act was passed which provided for the preservation of the sixteenth-section lands, and authority was given to the county courts to lease them and to apply the proceeds to the purposes of education. Three years later a literary fund was created for the support of schools, the sources of which were all escheats, confiscations, fines and forfeitures, and property accruing to the State. Neither the

principal nor the interest of this fund could be used until it amounted to \$50,000. In 1833 the fund reached that amount, and by act of March of that year provision was made for investing it in stock of the Planters' Bank of Mississippi. The dividends from the investment were to be used for the education of poor children. Meantime provision had been made for leasing the school lands for ninety-nine years at public auction and on personal security, and the securities thus accepted proved in many cases to be insufficient. Moreover, rents were often not paid, and in this way a large amount of this source of school support was lost. The investment made in the Planters' Bank was likewise lost when that institution failed.

The Chickasaw Fund and the Choctaw Fund were other funds used for educational purposes, but the growth and usefulness of these sources of school support are more or less uncertain. Both funds originated in the sixteenth-section land grants, which comprised about 838,329 acres. The Chickasaw counties, in the northern part of the State, received 174,555 acres and the Choctaw counties, in the southern part, received 663,774 acres, and from the sale of these lands arose the two funds. Parts of the Choctaw lands were sold before 1833, but the proceeds were lost through mismanagement and unsafe securities, and other parts were leased for long terms. From the sales of the Chickasaw lands a fund was created which finally came to be held in trust for the Chickasaw counties. The income from these funds was used under ante-bellum legislation for aiding schools in the two sections of the State.

North Carolina's permanent public-school fund was created in 1825 and was known as the literary fund. The act creating the fund defined its source as follows:

The dividends arising from the stock now held by the State in the banks of Newbern and Cape Fear and which have not heretofore been pledged and set apart for internal improvements; the dividends arising from stock which is owned by the State in the Cape Fear Navigation Company, and the Roanoke Navigation Company, and the Clubfoot

and Harlow Creek Canal Company; the tax imposed by law on licenses to the retailers of spirituous liquors and auctioneers; the unexpended balance of the Agricultural Fund, which by the act of the Legislature is directed to be paid into the public treasury; all moneys paid to the State for the entries of vacant lands (except the Cherokee lands); the sum of twenty-one thousand and ninety dollars, which was paid by this State to certain Cherokee Indians, for reservations to lands secured by them by treaty, when the said sums shall be received from the United States by this State; and of all the vacant and unappropriated swamp lands in this State, together with such sums of money as the Legislature may hereafter find it convenient to appropriate from time to time.

The same act vested the funds thus provided in a board, who were instructed to invest them in such a way as to promote their value. When sufficiently accumulated the endowment was to be distributed among the counties in proportion to their free white population to be used for instructing the youth of the State in reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The growth of the fund was slow during the first years of its existence, largely because it remained idle. The board was confronted with problems of safe investment as well as with other difficulties. By 1836, however, it was yielding an annual income of about \$33,000, though nothing had yet been done to use it as a means of supporting public schools, chiefly because it had not been considered large enough for that purpose. After 1836 the fund was greatly increased by the distribution of the surplus revenue in the federal treasury. Enormous revenues had accumulated as a result of unprecedented land sales and of the protective tariff; and under the leadership of Webster, who introduced the measure, an act was passed distributing the surplus on hand January 1, 1837, among the several States then in the Union, on the basis of their representation in Congress. The States were to agree to return the money when called on, provided not more than \$10,000 should be demanded at any time from any one State without sufficient notice, and all the States



were to be called on for their respective parts at the same time. More than \$28,000,000 was thus distributed.

North Carolina's share amounted to \$1,433,757.40, and its disposition was determined by several important interests and conditions. The first of these was financial and had to do with internal improvements. Previous state aid to this interest had not only proved unprofitable but had failed to provide better transportation facilities. Moreover, private companies and individual effort were ill prepared to engage in such enterprises, and with the era of railroad construction at hand there was a growing demand for a combination of state and private capital. Such a policy had been recommended repeatedly. It had also been urged that the vast acreage of unavailable swamp lands belonging to the State be drained so as to be made productive and profitable, but lack of funds prevented the State from inaugurating such a policy.

A decrease in the ancient and intense sectional rivalry between eastern and western interests also proved of influence in determining the disposition of North Carolina's share of the surplus revenue. This rivalry had for a generation existed as a result of an unequal distribution of representation in the Legislature, and demands for constitutional reform had as long been insistent. With the revision of the constitution in 1835 this reform was secured, and the conflict appeared less intense. Chance for united effort on public matters was now greatly enhanced. Moreover, the rise of the Whig Party revealed an important influence in North Carolina, where it adopted, and in 1836 elected a governor on, the progressive policy of increased state aid to internal improvements. These conditions and influences were purely political in character. Another equally important influence, perhaps, but of a different nature was the depleted condition of the state treasury. In the year that the surplus revenue was distributed North Carolina had a debt of about \$400,000 and a record of expenses exceeding or equaling the

revenues. And the literary fund was still insufficient for immediate educational service.

A joint legislative committee was appointed to inquire into the best method of disposing of the share to which the State was entitled. The plan finally adopted appropriated \$100,000 to the contingent expenses of the state government, \$300,000 to redeem the public debt, \$300,000 to the credit of the literary fund, \$200,000 to drain the swamp lands, and the remaining \$533,757.40 to the fund for internal improvements. The appropriation to the literary fund was to be invested in stock of the Bank of Cape Fear, and the \$200,000 appropriated to drain the swamp lands was indirectly an appropriation to the same fund, since the income from these lands was to be applied to it when the entries were made. Eventually all North Carolina's share became a part of the literary fund except the sum appropriated to the current expenses of the state government. But the \$500,000 immediately placed to the credit of the fund was not the only increase of that endowment at this time; by further legislation all the vacant swamp lands of the State were formally vested in the fund. Moreover, railroad stock owned by the State and amounting to \$600,000, the revenue from certain loans made by the internal-improvements board, and stocks in the Bank of the State of North Carolina valued at \$400,000 and in the Bank of Cape Fear valued at \$300,000, both the property of the State, were likewise vested in the literary board for educational purposes. The principal of the literary fund was thus increased about \$1,800,000. In November, 1840, the total resources of the fund amounted to more than \$2,125,000.

With the distribution of the surplus revenue the literary fund of North Carolina was large enough to be of considerable assistance to schools. Accordingly the first public-school law was enacted in the State in 1839, and a school system was shortly afterward established under it. The principle of school support adopted by this legislation was that of local taxation combined with appropriations from the literary fund; each local school district received from the income of the public endowment twice the

amount raised by local levy. Under this provision the State set in operation a creditable school system prior to 1860. This method of school support seemed well adapted to the needs of the State; in 1860 more than \$93,000 was raised in local taxes and more than \$186,000 was distributed from the literary fund to support public schools.

Before 1860 direct and permanent losses to the literary fund in North Carolina were not very considerable, but occasional carelessness in investing the funds in securities of declining value showed shortsighted management. Several misfortunes befell the endowment, however, during the ante-bellum period. The defalcation of the treasurer of the State in 1827 proved a temporary loss of about \$28,000 to the fund, though the Legislature later returned the amount with interest. A decline in dividends from the stock held in state banks somewhat retarded the growth of the fund before 1836 and proved a slight misfortune to the endowment. During the thirties and forties the fund was now and then used to meet deficits in the public fund, and occasionally it was drawn on to meet interest charges on state bonds. Large sums from the fund were thus temporarily used for expenses of the state government. The amounts were finally returned, but the frequent loss in interest charges, which were not always repaid, and the manner of regarding the fund as a source of supply when emergency arose were unwise and unjust practices.

The distribution of the surplus revenue in 1837 was a stimulus to education in many of the States. The table on page 178 shows the amounts the various States received and how the funds were used.<sup>1</sup>

Alabama's original constitution in 1819 provided that measures should be taken to preserve from waste or damage the lands which had been or which might be granted by the United States for the use of schools in each township in the State and that the funds

<sup>1</sup> Blackmar, *The History of Federal and State Aid to Higher Education*, p. 46.

STATE	AMOUNT	HOW USED
Alabama . . . . .	\$669,086.78	Education
Arkansas . . . . .	286,751.48	General purposes
Connecticut . . . . .	764,670.61	One half to education and one half to general purposes
Delaware . . . . .	286,751.48	Education
Georgia . . . . .	1,051,422.09	One third to education and two thirds to general purposes
Illinois . . . . .	477,919.13	Education and internal improvements
Indiana . . . . .	860,254.44	One half to education and one half to general purposes
Kentucky . . . . .	1,443,757.40	Education
Louisiana . . . . .	477,919.13	General purposes
Maine . . . . .	955,838.27	General purposes
Massachusetts . . . . .	1,338,173.57	General purposes
Maryland . . . . .	955,838.27	Education and general purposes
Mississippi . . . . .	382,335.31	General purposes
Missouri . . . . .	382,335.31	Education
Michigan . . . . .	286,751.48	Internal improvements
New Hampshire . . . . .	669,086.78	General purposes
New Jersey . . . . .	764,670.61	General purposes
New York . . . . .	4,014,520.71	Education
North Carolina . . . . .	1,433,757.40	Education and internal improvements
Ohio . . . . .	2,007,260.36	Education
Pennsylvania . . . . .	2,867,514.80	Partly for education
Rhode Island . . . . .	382,235.31	Education
South Carolina . . . . .	1,051,422.09	One third to education and two thirds to general purposes
Tennessee . . . . .	1,433,757.40	General purposes
Vermont . . . . .	669,086.78	Education
Virginia . . . . .	2,198,428.04	General purposes

raised from such lands should be applied in strict conformity to the object of such grants. The same instrument said that "schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." From that time until the passage in 1854 of the first state-wide public-school law, the Legislature passed numerous acts dealing with the sixteenth section in each township which



had been reserved by Congress for school purposes. One of the first of these acts was passed in 1819 and provided for leasing the school lands with a view to their improvement. The following year the limit of the leases was extended, and there began "a series of special acts modifying the original law in favor of particular claimants that in time worked havoc with the school lands." In 1823 another law was passed, which made further provision for leasing the lands and provided also for the organization of schools. Under the provisions of this act commissioners appointed by the county courts were to survey the school lands and to lease them at auction for a period of ten years. In 1825 the policy of incorporating school townships began, and the trustees were allowed to lease the lands to the highest bidder for a period of ninety-nine years, the proceeds from such leases to be invested in stock of the United States Bank or of the state bank.

For many years following this legislation the history of the public-school lands of Alabama is in large part the history of the state bank. In 1828 provision was made for depositing in that institution notes received in payment of school lands, to bear 6 per cent interest, and the principal collected on such sales could be invested in the stock of the bank, to bear the same interest and to be guaranteed by the State. A few years later there was a tendency to transfer the principal from the parent bank to its branches throughout the State "in order that local borrowers from the townships where these funds originated might be favored"; and by an act of 1837 the proceeds from the leases or sales of school lands, deposited in the bank or its branches, became the "capital stock of the said township." The principal of such funds could not be diminished, and only their income could be used for public-school support. A large quantity of school lands was sold under this legislation. In a short time, however, numerous private acts were passed extending the time of payment for certain purchasers, and at the session of 1842-1843 the Legislature passed an act which provided for canceling the

sales of school lands when "the insolvency of the purchasers" or similar causes made such sales unproductive. The result was widespread cancellation during the next few years.

Meanwhile the state bank had been very prosperous, and from 1836 to 1842 direct taxation was suspended, and the large income of the bank was looked to for defraying the expenses of the state government. The school fund naturally shared in this wave of prosperity. Moreover, the State had placed to the credit of the school fund its share of the surplus revenue of 1837, amounting to \$669,086.78, and this had been deposited in the state bank. In 1839 the bank was ordered to pay annually for school support the sum of \$150,000, which was increased to \$200,000 the following year.

Prosperity did not continue, however. In 1843 direct taxation was resumed, and the bank being unable to pay its obligations to the State or to education the school appropriation required by the law of 1840 was repealed. In 1846 the bank was placed in the hands of trustees, who received legislative instructions to retain a sufficient amount of the institution's assets "to pay off the amounts that may be due the several townships." The following year further steps were taken in favor of the schools. The senate committee appointed to investigate the subject reported that up to December, 1847, more than \$953,000 had been received from the sales of school lands and that more than \$73,000 was due in interest on those sales. Some of the branch banks reported that the money had been lent "indiscriminately" with other funds and that the amount formed a "part of the good, bad, and doubtful debts due the State," or that it was credited to the several townships and was a "charge against the general assets of the bank." This was the case with the branches at Decatur, Tuscaloosa, Montgomery, and Mobile, but the Huntsville branch retained the funds which belong to the schools and paid interest on them quarterly. The committee also reported that the bank and its branches held notes given for school lands amounting to \$453,000, more than \$208,000 of which was in litigation.

Steps were taken by legislation of 1848 to adjust the affairs of the state bank, and provision was made for vesting all funds arising from the sales of the sixteenth-section lands in the State, as trustee for the townships, and for paying such funds into the treasury of the State. The comptroller was required to report the amount due to each township, the governor was required to issue a certificate when other amounts were received, and the tax collector of each county "was required to deposit with the county treasurer an annual sum equal to the interest" at 6 per cent on the certificates held by the townships in the county. On the funds thus deposited the school commissioners could draw for school support. In 1853 it was reported that up to that time more than 558,000 acres of sixteenth-section lands had been sold for about \$1,575,000 and that \$1,183,000 had been paid into the state bank and to the state treasurer. The larger part of this had been funded in accordance with the act of 1848, and certificates had been delivered to the township for their quota. In 1850 the State owed the school fund about \$995,000 in addition to about \$59,000 in interest; in 1851 the interest on the school fund was more than \$103,000; and in 1853 there were about \$392,000 in notes which belonged to the townships.

✓ One bitter criticism of the administration of the fund was on the failure to invest the proceeds of the land sales in safe interest-bearing securities. Another was on the inequality of distribution of such proceeds. Mr. William F. Perry, the first state superintendent of public schools in Alabama, said, concerning this condition:

This fund, so far from being an aid, was really an obstacle in the way of the establishment of a general system of schools. Its uselessness for such a purpose was due to the great inequality of its distribution. There were many hundreds of townships whose school lands were totally valueless; and probably more than half the remainder possessed funds so small as to be practically valueless. There were whole counties whose township funds consolidated would hardly have supported a decent school. It should be remembered, too, that these

sections of the State contained a white population at once the densest and the most needy.

The townships having the largest school endowment were found chiefly in the Tennessee Valley and in the central portion of the State, known as the Black Belt. While it is true that the funds of most of them were legitimately and wisely used, it is also true that they belonged to those who were in least need of aid, and it is equally true that many of the most richly endowed townships were covered with cotton plantations and negro quarters and had no schools at all.

∩ This inequality of distribution was severely criticized by Judge A. B. Meek at the session of the Legislature in 1853-1854. Judge Meek was chairman of the committee in the House which framed the school law of that year, and in presenting the proposed legislation, which he drafted, the chairman pointed out some interesting facts. At that time there were 1572 townships in the State, and 873 of these had made sales of their sixteenth sections; the remainder had made no sales. The sales which had been made brought the sum of \$1,575,598, and sales of the remainder would have increased the school fund to nearly \$2,000,000. The value of the school lands in 13 counties was one third more than half the value of the total school lands of the State, although the white population of those counties was only about one fourth of the entire population of the State. Dallas County, for example, had a white population of 7000 and an annual school fund of \$5000; Mobile had a white population of 18,000 and no fund at all. Covington County received less than \$7 a year, while one township in Perry County had an annual school fund of \$1200. This inequality had its origin in the original legislation, which made the school lands the property of the townships rather than of the State.

By act of 1854 a state-wide and somewhat advanced school law was passed which looked to the elimination of the weak features of previous practices. Provision was made for a state educational fund and for establishing a creditable school plan, the features and operation of which will be treated in the following



chapter. The educational fund was to consist of an annual 8 per cent interest on the surplus revenue which the State received in 1837; an annual interest of 8 per cent on the proceeds from the sale of certain lands granted by the Federal Government in lieu of certain valueless sixteenth-section lands; an annual interest of 6 per cent on funds which had accrued or would accrue from the sale of sixteenth-section lands; the sum of \$100,000 from the state treasury; all escheats and taxes on banks, railroads, and insurance companies. In 1855 the income from these sources amounted to about \$237,000, which increased to about \$283,000 in 1860. The fund thus established recognized the sources of school support which existed at that time and provided for new sources. Provision was also made for a permissive local tax to supplement the income from the state funds, which were to be used exclusively for the payment of teachers. And from these sources the public schools of the State were maintained until the war.

This history of public education in Arkansas before the Civil War is largely the history of the sixteenth section, the seminary, and the saline lands, which constituted the basis of ante-bellum school support in the State, and in that respect may be regarded as a permanent fund. The sixteenth-section lands were the oldest of these sources of school support, dating from the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, and came into possession of the townships of Arkansas in 1819, when it was organized as a territory. Under territorial laws of 1829, 1831, and 1833 provision was made for caring for these lands, which contained about 928,000 acres. Arkansas was admitted as a State in 1819; and although its constitution made no provision for creating a permanent school fund from the sale of these lands, the State accepted in the same year the terms on which the lands were granted, that their proceeds should be devoted to educational support. In 1843 legislative provision was made for selling or leasing the sixteenth-section lands, and the proceeds from such sales or leases were to become a perpetual fund, the income only to be used for public-school

support. The lands were sold on ten years' time, however, and "in many cases were never paid for." For this and other reasons this source of school support was never very large.

In 1827 Congress set aside two townships for the use and support of a seminary of learning, and the lands thus granted came to be known as the seminary lands. In 1833 authority was given to sell a part of them for university purposes, and three years later the Legislature was given complete authority over them. In 1838 provision was made for selling the seminary lands, and the proceeds from the sales were to become a part of the capital of the Bank of the State of Arkansas. A few sales seem to have been made, but trouble soon arose over conflicts with squatters' claims, and losses were incurred. In 1847 provision was made for applying the proceeds of the seminary lands to the public-school fund, and about the same time the Legislature made the agent of the state lands the agent also of the seminary lands, with authority to dispose of them by private sales. The methods adopted under the provision caused another loss to this means of school support: the lands seem to have been purchased by a few individuals "who became securities for each other"; many of the notes were never paid, and the cash, which had been invested in the state bank, was lost to the schools with the failure of that institution.

The story of the saline lands, which were granted to the State by the United States for educational purposes, is similar to that of the seminary lands. The saline lands consisted of about forty-six thousand acres, the larger part of which had been located by 1860 and sold on the same terms as the seminary lands, the proceeds becoming a part of the capital of the state bank. In 1853 provision was made for applying the proceeds of these lands to the public schools, as was done in the case of the seminary funds in 1847. Thus all the lands granted to Arkansas for educational purposes were finally used for public-school support. Like the seminary lands, however, the funds arising from the saline lands were lost with the failure of the state bank.

The income from all these funds was used for public-school support before 1860. After 1849 the income from the seminary fund was distributed to the various counties on the basis of school population, "to be invested by the respective counties and to remain a perpetual fund." Under this method of distribution more than \$285,000 was paid over to the counties by 1860.<sup>1</sup> The income from the saline fund was similarly distributed after 1853, and by 1860 nearly \$24,000 was paid over to the counties. From these sources and the funds arising from the sixteenth-section lands public schools were largely supported in Arkansas before the Civil War. These means were inadequate, however, and the income from the lands seems to have accomplished but "little toward universal education in Arkansas." More would doubtless have been accomplished but for mismanagement and loss of the public funds. Probably \$750,000 which should have gone for educational support was lost before 1870 by insufficient legislation, bad debts, and general mismanagement.

The provisions for school support in Texas were not altogether unlike those which were made in the States which received sixteenth-section lands under the provisions of the Northwest Ordinance. In 1839 the Republic of Texas made provision for schools by granting to each organized county three leagues for the purpose of supporting a primary school or an academy in each county, and fifty leagues for the support of two colleges; and the following year an additional league was granted to each county for the same purpose. In 1845 Texas became a member of the Union, and its constitution provided that the Legislature should set apart as a perpetual fund "not less than one tenth of the annual revenue of the State, derivable from taxation," for the support of public schools. This provision of the constitution was complied with, and in 1854 the Legislature appropriated \$2,000,000 of 5 per cent bonds in the state treasury for public-school purposes. The fund thus created was known as the "special school fund." The interest only was to be used for

<sup>1</sup>Weeks, *History of Public Education in Arkansas*, p. 99.

supporting schools, and this was to be distributed among the counties of the State on the basis of their free white children between the ages of six and sixteen. The same act provided for establishing a school system in the State, to be supported by a combination of the income from the permanent fund and subscriptions and rate bills. In the same year Texas donated thirty-six million acres of land for encouraging railroad construction, and subsequent legislation gave the alternate sections of the lands to the school fund. The lands belonging to this fund originally embraced an area of more than fifty million acres. These lands furnished the basis of abundant support for schools and gave to Texas the largest permanent endowment for that purpose to be found in the United States. A great deal of this source of school support was lost, however, through defaulted interest and by sales of lands for less than their value.

Florida was made a territory in 1819, and in 1835 legislative attention was turned to the preservation of the sixteenth-section lands which each township received from Congress for school support and of the four townships of land received from the same source for the maintenance of seminaries of learning. In 1839 legislative provision was made for school trustees in each township, who were empowered to lease the lands of the township and to apply the proceeds "for the benefit of common schools." In 1843 the sheriffs of the counties were made commissioners of the school lands and authorized to appropriate the funds accruing from such lands to the education of poor children. In 1845 Florida was admitted to the Union, and its constitution, which had been framed seven years before, provided for the creation of a perpetual fund from the proceeds of all "lands that have been, or hereafter may be, granted by the United States for the use of schools and a seminary or seminaries of learning." The interest from this fund, "together with all moneys derived from any other source applicable to the same subject, shall be inviolably appropriated to the use of schools and seminaries of learning, respectively, and to no other purpose."



The original purpose was not to sell the sixteenth-section lands and consolidate the proceeds into a general school fund, but the rentals and proceeds from any sales of public lands were to be used for educational purposes in the townships to which the lands belonged. In 1848, however, the funds arising from the lands were taken from the authority of the townships and merged into a common fund under state control. To this fund were added also the net proceeds of all escheated estates, 5 per cent of the net proceeds from any other lands granted to the State by Congress, and all property found on the coast of the State. But the fund thus created was never large. In 1856 the appropriation from this source was only about \$6000, and at the outbreak of the Civil War it was only a few hundred dollars more. Funds arising from the endowment were distributed on a per-capita basis. In 1861 the school fund was surrendered to the State in exchange for certificates of indebtedness and seems to have been thus used for military purposes. At the close of the war the assets of the school fund were "about 600,000 acres of unsold school land."

Louisiana was admitted to the Union in 1812 and received about seven hundred and eighty-six thousand acres of sixteenth-section lands for the use of public schools. Ten per cent of the proceeds "of all public lands sold by the United States" was applied to school support in 1841, though several years passed "before any appreciable sums were received from these sources." In 1845 the constitution of the State provided for a perpetual fund, to consist of the proceeds of all lands which the United States had granted to the State for use of schools, of all lands which "may hereafter be granted or bequeathed" to the State unless given for some other purpose, and the proceeds of estates to which the State would be entitled by law. These sources were to be "held by the State as a loan," on which an annual interest of 6 per cent was to be paid for school support, together with the rents of all unsold lands. The fund thus provided for was to "remain inviolable," to be used only for the maintenance of public schools.

By constitutional provision in 1852 these sources were continued, and to them was added the interest of the State's share of the surplus revenue of 1837. This share, which amounted to \$477,919.14, had already been used for general purposes, however, and the legislation which appropriated to school support the interest on the amount established a credit fund rather than a productive endowment. Moreover, the sixteenth-section lands were held to be the property of the townships rather than of the State. Some of the townships surrendered their lands, however, and the proceeds were placed to the school fund; others held their lands and received slight returns from them; and still others lost all record of their lands.

By act of 1847 and additional legislation in the fifties somewhat advanced provisions were made for educating the white children of the State between the ages of six and sixteen. Chief among these was a provision for a property tax and a capitation tax for school support. These sources were to be combined with the income from the permanent school fund, and the total fund thus provided was to be apportioned to the various parishes on the basis of their scholastic population. Between 1847 and 1860 the sum of \$3,840,000 was appropriated for free-school support, but the amounts actually expended "exceeded the appropriations, owing doubtless to the payment of the annuity from the free-school fund out of the general fund."<sup>1</sup> As a result of the Civil War and reconstruction, however, Louisiana's debt reached the sum of \$40,000,000, and the school funds so liberally provided before 1860 were exploited and largely lost along with other resources of the State.

From the foregoing statement it will be seen that permanent public-school funds were established in all the Southern States except South Carolina before the Civil War, and that the antebellum public-school system was promoted in some measure by this means of financial support. In South Carolina, however, no such fund was established until 1868, and public-school support

<sup>1</sup>Fay, *The History of Education in Louisiana*, p. 105.

in that State before that time was made from direct legislative appropriations. It may be seen also that public endowments for educational purposes served to develop a wholesome interest in schools and, in some cases at least, stimulated local initiative and community enterprise. It appears, also, that in spite of the importance of this means of school support the funds were often carelessly and indifferently administered and that the record of losses to such endowments is a discreditable chapter in the history of the public school.

In addition to losses incurred during the ante-bellum period by incompetent management, maladministration, and the like, the school funds in most of the Southern States lost disastrously as a result of bank failures, depreciation of securities and of property during and following the Civil War, and as a result of exploitation during the period of reconstruction. Few if any of the States finally escaped losses from such causes during those years. Florida, Georgia, and Virginia used portions of their school funds for military purposes; the fund in Tennessee was greatly diminished by the failure of the state bank in which it was invested; North Carolina's fund was largely lost in the wreck that came to the banking system of the State in 1865; Louisiana's fund was exploited and largely lost during the years immediately following the war; and the funds in the other States were in these or other ways greatly diminished if not entirely lost between 1861 and 1876.

In the constitutions framed in accordance with the congressional plan of reconstruction the ante-bellum provisions for perpetual school funds were continued practically unchanged. Following reconstruction and during the years of readjustment, changes in the constitutional and legislative provisions for this form of school support were made, and gradually more or less creditable funds were reestablished in practically all the Southern States as an aid to public-school education. In 1917 permanent public-school funds of one kind or another were reported in Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Mississippi,

Florida, Arkansas, Alabama, Texas, and Louisiana. In that year Georgia had no permanent school fund, but was supporting its schools rather liberally by legislative appropriations raised by public taxation.

By the constitution of the State the permanent public-school fund of Virginia consists of the proceeds of all public lands donated by Congress for public free-school purposes, all escheated property, all waste and unappropriated land, all proceeds accruing to the State by forfeitures, all fines collected for offenses committed against the State, and such other sums as the Legislature may appropriate. The total fund amounts to more than \$3,525,000 and is invested in state bonds and other securities which yield from 3 to 6 per cent interest. The annual interest is applied exclusively to the maintenance of primary and grammar schools. The second auditor of Virginia is by law the accountant of the fund, and its securities are kept in his office. He collects all the interest, deposits it in the state treasury, and pays it to the objects for which the fund is designed.

The "State Literary Fund" is the permanent public-school fund of North Carolina and, under an act of 1903, which reorganized the endowment, it consists of all funds derived before that time from the sources enumerated in the constitution and all funds hereafter so derived, together with the interest on such funds. The fund amounts to about \$550,000 and is in safely secured notes which yield 4 per cent interest annually. The Legislature of 1917 added to the fund the sum of \$500,000, which is to be available in six annual installments. With the present rate of increase the fund will amount to more than \$1,250,000 when the recent legislative appropriation has been received. The interest on this fund is used exclusively to build and improve public schoolhouses, under rules and regulations adopted by the state board of education. Loans are made to the county board of education, payable in ten annual installments, at 4 per cent interest, and are secured by notes of the county board and a lien upon the total school funds of the county. All houses



built by aid from this fund are required to be constructed in strict accordance with plans approved by the state department of education. Every county in the State has been assisted in this way, and nearly one fourth of all the public schoolhouses of the State have been built or improved by the aid of this fund since 1903.

The total amount of South Carolina's permanent public-school fund, which was created in 1868, is nearly \$62,000, invested in South Carolina bonds, which yield  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent interest. The income derived from these investments is apportioned to the counties of the State by the state board of education for public-school support. The permanent school fund of Tennessee amounts to \$2,512,500 and is in the form of a certificate of indebtedness, on which the State pays an annual interest of 6 per cent.<sup>1</sup> To this fund other items may be added from time to time; among these are the proceeds of all escheated property, forfeitures, and other items. The income from this fund amounted to more than \$133,000 in 1916 and was distributed to the various counties for public-school support.

Mississippi has certain small funds, known as the Chickasaw Fund, the Choctaw Fund, the Hancock Fund, and the township funds, which aggregate approximately \$1,500,000 and are invested at an average annual rate of 6 per cent. The income from these funds is used for the purpose of extending the public-school term, supplementing the salaries of teachers, repairing buildings, and adding to the equipment of schools. Florida's permanent school fund amounts to more than \$1,500,000 and is invested in bonds and securities which yield from 3 to 8 per cent. The income from these investments is annually distributed to the various counties on the basis of average attendance.

The permanent school fund of Arkansas amounts to about \$1,134,000 and is invested in 5 per cent bonds. The income from this investment goes to the state apportionment for public-school support, on the basis of scholastic population. Alabama's

<sup>1</sup> Public School Laws of Tennessee (1916), pp. 27, 28.

permanent school fund comprises the proceeds from the sales of sixteenth-section lands, proceeds from the sales of indemnity lands, proceeds from the sales of the so-called valueless sixteenth-section lands, and the United States surplus revenue, amounting in all to more than \$3,000,000. The fund is held in trust by the State for the support of public schools and yields from 4 to 6 per cent annually. The income is credited to the general educational fund of the State.

The permanent school fund of Texas amounts to more than \$68,000,000 and "consists of bonds, land notes, unsold lands, and cash on hand." The income from this endowment is known as the state available school fund and is used for general school support, being apportioned to the school districts on the basis of scholastic population. Louisiana's permanent fund consists of a state debt due the school fund, certain consolidated and constitutional bonds, which represent the proceeds from sixteenth-section lands, and unsold common-school lands. The state debt to the fund yields a certain revenue which, in reality, however, comes from state taxation; and as interest on the sixteenth-section funds deposited with the state treasurer the schools receive about \$92,000 a year, which increases with new sales. This income is used for general public-school support.

It will be seen that permanent public-school endowments represented a form of indirect taxation for school support. They served both to relieve the people temporarily of a direct burden and to stimulate what may properly be called a quasi-public educational effort. It should also be kept in mind that this means of aiding the support of public schools became popular when the idea of education as a public obligation and function was weak and faltering. The beginnings of direct state taxation for public schools had not yet been made in the South. But the agitation of the question of state support of schools was widening and gaining force, and through the means of permanent public-school endowments sentiment for direct public support of education gained in favor. Even with this assistance for the

cause, however, many years were to pass before the principle of free public education for all the children, by taxation on all the property of the State, was to be safely established.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Explain the bitter fight which early developed over the question of school support by public taxation. What evidence can you offer to show that the fight has not yet been entirely won?

2. Why were the lawmaking bodies of the early national period slow and reluctant to follow the urgings of the governors to make adequate provision for public schools? Why are present-day legislative bodies often very slow to take advanced and progressive educational steps promptly?

3. Make a study of the ante-bellum permanent school fund of your State and compare it with similar funds in other States in (*a*) purpose, (*b*) sources, (*c*) method of administration and of operation, (*d*) results and influence.

4. In what way did permanent public-school funds promote the establishment of public-school systems in the Southern States? In what way, if any, did such funds retard the growth of public schools in those States?

5. What are the sources and the size of the present permanent public-school fund of your State? For what purposes is the fund now used?

6. Did the operation of the permanent public-school fund in your State before the Civil War have any effect in retaining the element of charity in public educational effort? Why?

7. Make a study of the growth of taxation for public schools in your State and account for the opposition which the principle of taxation for schools has had to meet.

8. What arguments are made against taxation for public education—elementary, secondary, and higher—in your State? in your immediate community? Point out the weakness of such arguments as they are now used.

9. Explain why the older States often established permanent funds before they set up a state school system.

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## CHAPTER VII

### THE AWAKENING AND ATTEMPTS AT REFORM

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. The educational revival during the second quarter of the nineteenth century was a part of a broad reform movement and was not confined to any particular section of the country. The movement was being felt throughout the South at the outbreak of the Civil War.

2. The response in Virginia appeared in legislation for schools as early as 1829, but the school plan most widely used during the remainder of the ante-bellum period was defective in principle, purpose, and operation. Throughout that time, however, there appeared a growing sentiment for better educational opportunity which reflected itself in several ways, especially in the work of educational conventions, but the war interrupted the practical improvement promised in the fifties.

3. South Carolina held back also from establishing an adequate system of public schools before 1860. In 1835 slight improvement was made in the law of 1811, and the movement for better provisions was agitated constantly during the next twenty-five years. Several attempts were made to revise the laws and to inaugurate a complete system, but all efforts for practical reforms failed.

4. The plan set up in Tennessee in 1830 served as the basis of the ante-bellum school system in that State. After 1835, conscious efforts were made to improve the schools, which had many misfortunes before 1860. Slight improvement was made by that date, and plans for a complete reorganization were being made at the outbreak of the war.

5. The fortunes of public schools in North Carolina were not altogether unlike those of the other States, but the plan of 1839 and improvements in 1852 made possible a school system somewhat advanced in support and control.

6. Georgia showed promise of providing a creditable school plan before 1825, and efforts at improvement were made during the next three decades. But the State failed to establish more than a permissive county system which was unfortunately intended primarily for poor children.

7. Similar experiments for public educational reform were carried on in Louisiana, which was able to achieve slight success ; in Mississippi, where the subject of schools was greatly agitated before the war ; in Alabama, which showed marked improvement in the fifties ; in Arkansas, where early legislation proved defective and impracticable ; and in Florida and Texas, in which States the reform movement was also thwarted by the war.

8. The response of the Southern States to the spirit of the educational revival was therefore not complete, but a new consciousness on the subject was being aroused at the close of the ante-bellum period.

9. Slavery, aristocratic conceptions, sectarian interests, objection to taxation for school purposes, the rural character of the South, poor means of communication, and other factors combined to retard the revival spirit.

10. Certain other factors were at work, however, to promote the cause of schools, and considerable progress was made for elementary education in the South prior to the Civil War.

From the preceding chapters it will be seen that during the first four or five decades of the national period education was gradually transferred from the Church and ecclesiastical control to control by the State. But this transfer was slowly made. Many forces of an economic, social, and political nature had been at work during the first half century of national life, and out of these influences marked changes appeared in education. There was an expansion in state constitutional provisions for schools, and more specific and mandatory legislative provisions were substituted for the general and vague provisions of the earlier period. New demands were made for educational facilities, and a new impetus was given to state support and control of schools. A new educational consciousness was aroused, and toward the close of the first half of the nineteenth century there appeared an educational revival which was rapidly and widely extending at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Several influences combined to produce this new consciousness on the subject of schools as an obligation of the State. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century there appeared a

gradually developing faith in the power of the people. Jeffersonian democracy was rapidly culminating. Property qualifications and other similar restrictions on suffrage and officeholding were slowly abolished and the franchise was extended. Class rule and political inequalities which had grown out of the aristocratic conception of government and of education were losing and the democratic movement was gaining strength. There was an increase in the number of elective officers, and in other ways the democratic theory of government was extending. Industrial methods were slowly changing, larger centers of population were developing, and villages were forming here and there. These changes were more rapidly made in other sections than in the South, but even there the nature of the educational problem in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was entirely unlike that of the colonial or the early national period.

The educational awakening which thus appeared was a part of a broad reform movement in the development of sound democratic ideals. Educationally the storm center of this reform was doubtless in Massachusetts and Connecticut, where Horace Mann and Henry Barnard were conspicuous leaders and where educational progress was more or less spectacular. But the change which was taking place during these years showed itself in educational effort in other sections of the country as well as in New England. Awakened sentiment for popular education appeared in New York, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Michigan, and in a few of the Southern States. But slavery and its natural hindrances to the theory of public education and certain other factors somewhat delayed the revival in education in that region. Even there, however, the ground for a reorganization of educational effort was being prepared, public opinion was slowly being molded, and a general movement for free-school systems was rapidly gaining in the fifties. This movement was least successful in those States which inherited the most persistent English traditions and where class distinctions were most sharply drawn, and most successful where

class distinctions were least pronounced and where the middle class was strongest. Throughout the South generally, however, the movement was being felt to a greater or less degree at the outbreak of the Civil War.

Virginia and South Carolina, more nearly English in traditions and interests than any of the older States, reacted only feebly to the revival, though agitation for increased educational opportunity reached creditable proportions in each State in the fifties. It was pointed out in preceding chapters that Virginia established a permanent school fund in 1810, which grew into a large endowment by 1860, and that in a very small measure the State committed itself to the theory of its renowned educational statesman when it enacted the law of 1818. It was also pointed out that conditions in South Carolina were not altogether unlike those in Virginia and that the theory of education was practically the same in each State. South Carolina had given attention to the subject of public schools and had adopted a school plan for the poorer citizens; but the law of 1811, which served as the legal basis of the State's entire ante-bellum educational legislation, was so defective in principle as to prevent its own success.

The school plan created in Virginia by the act of February, 1818, was at first very clumsy, though Governor Preston said in his message to the Legislature the following December that the plan promised great success. From the limited experiments made by the school officials, from some of whom reports had been received, he believed that "most important advantages to the community may be derived from their efforts under the law of the last session." But the system was not to be very successful. The early reports on its operation showed numerous obstacles, some of which were not contemplated when the plan was made. Among these were insufficiency of funds, a lack of convenient schools, a lack of decent food and clothing (which "deters parents from exposing their poverty to the world"), a lack of individual zeal, and the inability of parents to clothe and feed their children "so as to make them regular scholars."



Extreme poverty in one county led to the suggestion that the county commissioners should furnish "cheap clothing for a number of poor children whose parents and guardians are too indigent to admit of furnishing them." In some counties it was practically impossible, on account of the sparseness of population, to secure teachers; and many of those who were teaching in the State would not have been chosen had there been competition in their selection, though teachers of "correct morals" were usually engaged. It also appeared that some of those who were taught during the early operation of the system were themselves later engaged to teach in the schools which they had attended.

As early as 1826 serious questions began to be raised about the system, which was reported as not meeting "the just expectations of the State." The literary fund, which at that time had a large permanent capital, was devoted almost exclusively to purposes of charity. In that year the governor recommended the suspension of the entire system until the work could be renewed on a more extended and satisfactory plan. This part of his message was referred to the appropriate legislative committee, which made a suggestive investigation and report. The committee applauded the educational efforts of other States, but declared that Virginia should not be "insensible to the fact, that in this generous career, in which . . . she might have been expected to be a leader, her young sisters have preceded her." If the system had not utterly failed, the report continued, it had not been productive of the beneficial results which had been anticipated. Moreover, the official reports of the school commissioners, personal observation, and "the general opinion of those most conversant with the practical operation of the system" confirmed the governor's opinion. The committee concluded that the failure of the system was not due to accidental defects in the details of its administration, but to permanent and inherent weaknesses in the principle of the plan. It was recommended that it was inexpedient either to suspend the system or to apply the funds exclusively to the education of the poor; that the annual

appropriation should be applied generally; that there should be a combination of private contributions or tuition fees with the public bounty; and that an assessment should be authorized to supply the necessary funds when the annual appropriation and the tuition fees were insufficient.

These recommendations later led indirectly to the passage of a law in 1829 which became the basis of the so-called "district free-school system" of the State. By this law the school commissioners were authorized to divide their counties into convenient school districts, and when the inhabitants of a district raised by voluntary contribution three fifths of the amount necessary to erect "a good and sufficient schoolhouse," the local authorities could appropriate the remaining two fifths for that purpose out of the usual county appropriation from the income from the literary fund, provided it did not exceed 10 per cent of that appropriation. The school building and lot were to become the property of the State. The local authorities could appropriate \$100 out of the regular county appropriation "for the employment of a good and sufficient teacher" for such a school, provided a like or greater amount should be raised by the inhabitants of the district. The school was to be open free to all white children of the district and to be under the control of three district trustees, two of whom were to be elected by the inhabitants of the district and the third appointed by the county school commissioners. The same act allowed teachers four cents a day for instructing each poor child entered by the commissioners, but no allowance was to be made for any child who was not actually entered by a county commissioner. Further provision was made by which the commissioners could purchase books, stationery, and other necessary school articles for poor children, provided such expenditure did not exceed 5 per cent of the annual school quota of the county.

A few counties took preliminary steps immediately to adopt the new system, but it was never more than partially established by any. By 1835 the district free-school system had been

partially adopted in Monroe, Franklin, Campbell, Southampton, Smyth, and Washington counties, but in all of these, except the last, it was finally discontinued or abandoned. It was evident that the legal provisions were insufficient to promote the plan. Campbell County reported in 1836 that its school was "dormant for the last year owing to a providential state of things beyond the control of man"; and the commissioners in most of the other counties where the experiment was tried soon came to take no notice of the "free-school" attempts, but gave their attention to the education of the poor under the plan inaugurated in 1818. In Washington County, however, the system showed some promise of success. In 1835 thirty-eight of its fifty-four districts had free schools in houses built largely at the expense of the local communities, and two years later thirty-one of its fifty districts had schools under the law of 1829.

In 1840 some of the county commissioners referred to the district plan of 1829 and recommended its continuance and gradual introduction into the counties of the State. It was suggested that legislation be enacted authorizing the counties disposed to adopt the plan to raise by levies upon themselves the amount of any deficiencies which existed after the funds of the State and the voluntary contributions had been applied. Lack of funds and the permissive character of the legislation, however, were not the only obstacles confronting the plan. There were only eleven white people to the square mile in the State and only three of school age, and this sparsity of population operated seriously against the practicability of the system. Moreover, it contained a charity feature which greatly limited its possibilities for usefulness, and for that reason it was only a slight improvement over the plan of 1818. Attempts to improve the district free-school system in the forties will be noted farther on in this chapter.

With the exception of the law of 1829, which gave only slight stimulus to educational effort in the State, conditions continued unchanged. The system inaugurated in 1818 had undergone

little or no improvement in organization or administration, but it was doubtless ministering to the educational needs of many children who would otherwise have been entirely neglected. The actual operation of the system and the place it held in popular esteem may be viewed measurably well from representative reports of the county commissioners between 1830 and 1850.

From these reports it appeared that the commissioners in Albemarle County were not in the habit of examining the qualifications of the teachers. Sparseness of population in Bath County prevented the maintenance of schools in "many neighborhoods where some children reside who are proper objects of the fund." The commissioners resided at such a distance from the schools that they were unable to "give much satisfactory information" concerning the state of education in their county. Brooke County gave no preference "either to boys or girls" and Cabell County followed the same policy. There were many poor children in the latter county who "would have remained in entire ignorance of the elementary branches of education" but for the annual appropriation from the literary fund.

The children sent to school in Campbell County "progressed in learning as well as other children of equal capacities." The commissioners in one year failed to report "agreeable to law" on account of a heavy rain on the day previous to their annual meeting, which prevented them from attending. In Cumberland County the children sent to school were between eight and fifteen years of age, preference being given to the eldest. In one year no children were sent to school in Fayette County because the treasurer had neglected to draw the county's quota of the fund. No distinction was made between girls and boys in Floyd County; the commissioners had difficulty in securing good teachers, "but they think this will soon be obviated, as the country becomes more enlightened." The commissioners of Frank in County believed the funds should be confined to poor children. The quota allowed Goochland County was as much "as can be beneficially applied under the present system"; the commissioners



thought it impracticable to district "the county, as authorized by law." The commissioners of Grayson County made provision for the children between eight and fifteen years of age and "only such whose parents, guardians, or friends, promise their constant and punctual attendance." If a sufficient number of teachers could have been secured in Hardy County "very great advantages might result from the funds appropriated to the education of the poor." The commissioners in Isle of Wight County considered as coming within the meaning of the word "indigent" those children whose parents were "unable to pay their just debts, and others who have but little property." The teachers of Kanawha County were known to be of good moral character and "capable of instructing in the common rudiments of education."

Good teachers could not be had in every neighborhood in Mason County, where "the settlement is too thin to afford a numerous school." The commissioners of Monongalia County believed the system very defective, though they were unable to suggest corrective measures. They did believe, however, that the qualifications of teachers should be more carefully guarded: "many of the teachers are but little qualified, and a great waste of public money is the consequence." Morgan County had difficulty in securing good teachers. The quota allowed Northumberland County was "amply sufficient to educate" all its poor children. The commissioners of Norfolk Borough appropriated their quota of the school fund to "the Lancaster school," the trustees of which agreed to educate the poor children sent by the commissioners; and a female orphan asylum, maintained by private benevolence, seems to have received slight aid from the state bounty. In Nottoway County it was not difficult to find "fit subjects to be sent to school: it is, to appearance, a scuffle as to who shall be sent." The children were taught only reading, writing, and arithmetic in Orange County. No preference was given to either sex, "as the commissioners conceive that degree of education necessary for girls as well as boys." Four Sunday

schools in Petersburg, with ninety teachers and six hundred "scholars on their registers," a night school maintained by the Mechanics' Benevolent Association and open to the children or the apprentices of the members, and an infant school "skillfully and faithfully taught" furnished unusual educational opportunity for that community. But the benefits of these schools were not generally extended to the poor children of the community, and the commissioners believed that State aid should be given to those schools in return for instructing some poor children.

The teachers of Prince Edward County were not examined. Schools were scarce in Prince George County, and it was difficult to get the children to attend such schools as were accessible to the various neighborhoods. Some of the children received benefit in Pittsylvania County, while others, "owing to the incompetency of the teachers," received but little benefit. Teachers were not examined in Randolph County. Many of the teachers in Rockbridge County were "of correct moral deportment." All the teachers in Southhampton County were "examined as to their qualifications and moral character," and Smyth County had "adopted rules for the examination of teachers."

In the main these conditions continued practically unchanged throughout the ante-bellum period. In 1837 Governor David Campbell had asked the Legislature why it had failed to make adequate educational provision for the State; he was alarmed at the extent of illiteracy, which he regarded as humiliating. A year later he said that the system established in 1818 was not only defective in principle but imperfectly administered, and he doubted if much good had been actually accomplished since it was put in operation. In that year there were 200,000 children in the State between the ages of five and fifteen. Fully 40,000 of them were poor and only half of that number were in school. Those in school, the governor said, derived little or no instruction "owing to the incapacity of the teachers, as well as to their culpable negligence and inattention." The number likely to remain uneducated was "really of appalling magnitude," and the

literary destitution of such a large portion of the population demanded a reorganization of the school system and ample provisions for putting it into successful practice. The present system, looking only to the poor and insufficiently supported, could not be effective in promoting any general reformation of the undesirable conditions.

The entire scheme was generally considered defective and unwholesome. By discriminating between classes in the community the plan aroused the hostility of the poorer people, for whom it was designed, and they were generally unwilling to proclaim themselves paupers by accepting the scant charity thus extended them by the State. Moreover, the plan was separated from the interest and influence of the public by the provision which placed the appointment of the county commissioners, who were to administer the annual appropriation of the literary fund, in the hands of the county courts which had so effectively obstructed the inauguration of the system provided by the law of 1796. These defects alone were sufficient to defeat the system, but educational advancement was also seriously retarded because the plan made no demand on local initiative and community effort. Although occasional amendments made to the original act served clumsily as devices for mitigating the disappointment of the friends of education and for decreasing the hostility of the class for whom the plan was established, yet the Legislature remained inactive and furnished no permanent relief.

In December, 1841, Governor Rutherford believed that some form of taxation should be authorized for public schools, but the Legislature remained inactive. A year later Superintendent Francis H. Smith, of the Virginia Military Institute, in a communication to the governor, said that the school system was both "defective and inoperative," and he appealed to those in authority for a remedy. In 1843 Governor McDowell called attention to the educational need of the State, saying: "I should be faithless to one of my clearest and most honorable duties if I did not present it again, and again invoke for it the care, the thought and the

legislation to which it is entitled." He urged taxation for school support. In 1844 and again in 1845 the same governor called attention to the important subject. "I should rejoice," he said, "to be spared the necessity of the duty, but neither I nor any executive ever can be, so long as the legislative and statistical history of this subject remains as it is." It was time, he believed, for the Legislature to decide whether education was to be regarded as a private concern or as an interest of the State.

During these years, however, a growing sentiment had appeared in favor of better educational opportunity and had reflected itself in a series of educational conventions. These meetings were largely the result of a rising educational sentiment in the western counties. Most of the colleges of the State and the larger part of the academies were located on the eastern slope of the great dividing mountain range, which was slaveholding and aristocratic. In the western counties slavery was less extensive, and there gradually developed a middle class whose influence was beginning to be felt. In this region public educational sentiment was wholesome and strong; it was the vote of the members of the Legislature from this region which had passed the educational law of 1796, of 1810, and of 1829. In the eastern counties, more aristocratic and wealthy, education was regarded as a private and domestic concern; in the western section education by tutors or private schools was not available for the masses. And the agitation for public schools was strong.

One of these conventions had been held in Clarksburg, now in West Virginia, in the autumn of 1841, and had been attended by more than one hundred delegates, many of whom were very prominent. Educational subjects were discussed, and committees were appointed to prepare an address to the people of the State and a memorial to the Legislature. Another convention was held in Lexington, and delegates attended from Augusta, Bath, Botetourt, and Rockbridge counties. The meeting was presided over by Dr. Henry Ruffner, president of Washington College (now Washington and Lee University) and father of William H. Ruffner,



Virginia's celebrated educational leader from 1870 to 1882. As a result of this meeting Dr. Ruffner prepared and had presented to the Legislature a report which pointed out the defects of the school system of the State and suggested a remedy. The remedy proposed was state taxation, a state board of education, a state superintendent, county and local organization and supervision, normal schools and provisions for training teachers, public libraries, and other features of an advanced school system. The chief weakness of the plan appeared in its failure to leave out the weakening principle of Virginia's ante-bellum educational scheme; the schools were to be supported by taxation, but the local school officers were to designate the families most worthy of aid.<sup>1</sup> About the same time a convention was held in Richmond and was attended by more than one hundred delegates, among whom were several members of the Legislature. The meeting recommended and adopted a plan for a district free-school system, similar to that attempted in 1829, and prepared a memorial to the Legislature and an address to the people. A bill based on the plan proposed was passed by the House, but rejected by the Senate.

In 1845 another convention met in Richmond, presented a memorial to the Legislature, and a local committee was appointed to watch its effect on that body. The result was a report of the legislative committee on education, which declared that the "present plan had both failed of its ends and is condemned on public principles." The committee suggested a plan which promised to serve as a "nucleus for further reforms." The plan proposed a state superintendent, a transfer of the appointment of county commissioners from the county courts to the people, taxation, a rate bill on all (except the poor) for school support, and provisions for training teachers.

Largely as a result of this report the laws on the subject of education were amended and somewhat improved in 1846, though the weakening element of charity still persisted. The local courts

<sup>1</sup> Journal of the House of Delegates, 1841-1842, Document 7.

were given authority to lay off their counties or corporations and to appoint county commissioners who were to elect county superintendents. These officers were to have control of the county systems and to handle the school finances, receiving as their compensation for such services  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent on all amounts actually expended for educational purposes. The commissioners were to see to the education of indigent children and enter with the teachers in their localities such number of such children as their county quota of the literary fund would allow, paying for their tuition as usual. The other provisions of the act were similar to previous educational legislation in the State. However, if the plan provided by this act failed to meet the wants or approval of any community, then the county courts, on petition of one fourth of the legal voters of the county, could order an election on the question of district free schools, two thirds of the legal voters being necessary to carry such an election.

At the same time another act was passed which gave the county courts authority to order an election on the subject of free district schools on petition of one third of the qualified voters, and a vote of two thirds of the legal voters was required to carry the election. The schools established under the provisions of this act were to be open free to all white children above the age of six years and were to give instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, "and (where it is practicable) English grammar, geography, history (especially that of the State of Virginia and of the United States), and the elements of physical science, and such other and higher branches as the school commissioners may direct." The district trustees were to provide the building and elect the teachers; the expenses, including the teacher's salary were to be paid "by a uniform rate of increased taxation" upon the inhabitants of the county in addition to the county's quota from the income of the literary fund. Towns could adopt the system separate from the county, and after a year's trial any county or town could reject it by a majority vote. This law seemed an improvement, and the plan

which it provided would have changed the educational condition of the State had it been mandatory on the counties. But it was left optional with the counties to adopt or reject the plan proposed, and, like the act of 1796, the law of 1846 failed of its purpose. During the next few years slight changes were made in the legislation of 1846, but they produced but little practical improvement.

By 1847 the inconvenience of so many varying legislative provisions for the same object was apparent. Under the law of the State any county could select "any district system of schools which may have been adopted by any county of this commonwealth, or which may have been previously passed into a law by the General Assembly." The plan formulated in 1818 for educating the poor was still the plan most generally followed in the State, and this continued to be followed until the Civil War. As for the so-called district free-school plan, attempted first in 1829 and amended in the forties, this was partially adopted in only a few counties and never proved very successful in any. The plan of 1829 seems to have been more or less successful in Washington County for a few years, but it was soon abandoned in the other counties where it was tried. However, by legislation of 1846 a certain slight stimulus was given to the district free-school system, which continued until the war. It was partially adopted in perhaps a dozen counties and three or four towns, but it was never very popular. Its chief weakness was its lack of mandatory provisions for taxation for school support. Lack of funds, however, was not the only obstacle in the way of its general introduction; sparsity of population also operated against the practicability of the system.

Slight educational improvement was made in Virginia in the fifties, and in the closing years of that decade sentiment in favor of increased educational opportunity began to show itself. With the revision of the constitution in 1851 provision was made for applying one half of the capitation taxes "to the purposes of education in primary and free schools." This was the first time

the constitution of the State had anything to say about education. In that year the permanent available capital of the literary fund amounted to \$1,571,000, with an income of \$101,000, and the annual appropriation for school purposes was increased at that time from \$45,000 to \$75,000. The friends of schools believed that with the additional revenue from the capitation taxes new energy would be put into the educational work of the State, which was described as "inefficient and defective." In 1853 the Legislature appropriated to education all the capitation taxes, which were expected to amount to about \$52,000. This and the annual appropriation of \$75,000 from the literary fund promised increased facilities for the instruction of a large but worthy class of children.

The educational sentiment of this period was perhaps best reflected in the proceedings of two sessions of the Virginia Educational Convention held in Richmond in 1856 and 1857, and representing the interests of the academies and colleges of the State. The first meeting was held in July, 1856, and committees were appointed to study the educational condition of the State and to report at another meeting which was to be held the following year. The second convention assembled in August, 1857, and the reports of these committees were heard. Chief among these was the report from the committee on the literary fund.

This committee reported that the revenue from this fund had been applied "exclusively to the poor children," except where the district free-school system had been adopted, and where there was a surplus beyond the actual needs of the poor, when the county authorities could transfer such surplus to any incorporated college or academy in their counties. Such transfers were not frequently made, however, if at all. The report said that the benefits derived from the principal distribution of the fund were very "problematical" and pointed out that the school endowment was the property of all the people:

We therefore meet at once a moral question. Is it right to take the property of the many and bestow it *exclusively* on the few? . . .



They are the privileged class, the aristocracy of poverty. Now is it right to exclude from all the benefits of the literary fund all the children of this glorious old commonwealth, except those who put in the plea of rags and dirt? . . . Can this injustice and partiality benefit the poor children? Is it a law of humanity, that to lift up, you must first degrade, that to elevate the soul and spirit of a child, you must first make him a public pauper? . . . Has the pauper system of education diminished the number of your intellectual paupers? Or is it, like every other system of legally supported pauperism, a fire that feeds itself?

The partial manner of distribution was not the only criticism of the fund and its operation. The practice of paying teachers from three to six cents a day for each poor child taught was vicious in its effects and tended to dwarf rather than to liberalize the spirit of teacher, child, and parent. The management of the fund was also criticized, and Governor Henry A. Wise was requested to furnish the convention with any information which he had concerning the fund and its management. The governor stated at the outset, in complying with the request, that the law applying the capitation taxes to education had not been observed, in that this source of school support had not been promptly applied to the literary fund. As a result, between \$100,000 and \$150,000 had accumulated and was not being used for purposes of education. Moreover, fully one fifth of the capital of the literary fund had been reported lost or given away on account of poor investments, poor management, and debts due from defaulting officers; and in addition to this loss, loans to institutions amounting to \$223,000 had been released by unconstitutional legislative action. Besides, there were constant accumulations in the treasury which should have been invested, and under the method used it was almost impossible to prevent surpluses from lying idle in the hands of the county superintendents. Some of the facts which Governor Wise gave have a certain interest in this connection.

The executive pointed out that of the total funds available for education between the years 1852 and 1856, inclusive, nearly

40 per cent was not applied to that purpose. The amounts of school money continuously in the hands of the superintendents of schools were more than one third of the total amount paid by them for educational purposes. On the county quotas which the superintendents drew at the beginning of the year they received a commission of 5 per cent and also had continuous use of at least one third of the entire quota without any interest charge. At the current rate of interest this amount was not an inconsiderable sum. During the years under consideration the average annual sum expended by the superintendents was more than \$159,000 and the average annual balance left in their hands was above \$52,000; on these sums they received a commission of 5 per cent and had the use of the \$52,000 without any interest charge. The governor also pointed out that the practice of using for private purposes the unexpended balances of the school quotas had grown very common among the county superintendents, who did not think it wrong or illegal to use the funds in this manner rather than have them idle. Although fully one third of the county quotas was regularly left in the hands of these officers at the end of each school year, it was customary to draw in advance the full quota apportioned to the county.

Notes in bank are paid with these quotas. Orders, for example, are often sent to Richmond to draw the county quotas, and accompanying these are orders to pay out of the amounts various private bills and debts in this very city. . . . This is common, and yet not considered wrong or illegal.

Continuing, the governor said:

The truth is that the pauper children do not partake of the bounty in any considerable proportion at all. The poor little girls without fly-flap bonnets and the little shoeless boys do not go to school, because the shame of poverty keeps them away from that *charity* which points its finger at their indigence. The fact is that the larger portion of parents whose children take the bounty, are those who are able to pay for tuition. The poor are driven away from the fund, and it is used as a

mere auxiliary for those who have enough of their own to educate their children; and the application of the fund in the present mode has, in many instances, the injurious effect of relaxing their efforts to establish and keep up efficient schools. The pretext then that this bread is needed to feed the poor, is but the art of misapplying the funds for education. The poor are not fed by it at all, and those for whom it is applied do not obtain much more than half the amount which the State provides. . . . I repeat, then, that a large amount of our means is withheld. That another large amount is diverted from the purposes fixed by the constitution and the law. That another large amount is permitted to remain idle in the hands of fiduciaries, or they are using a portion of the public funds for private purposes, without interest or other consideration. That the cost of disbursing the amount which is expended is too great,<sup>1</sup> and is greater than the law allows. That this is a temptation to a breach of trust, and to keep up the abuses of the system and the misapplication of the funds for education. . . . That the whole present system is calculated to shame the poor and to relax those who have means among the people, and is, to use the lightest phrase, a "sink pocket" to the public treasury. . . . Whether we mean, then, to make bad scholars or good teachers, the present system must be reformed. We must husband our capital of the literary fund better; we must collect its income, guard it more sacredly, keep its accounts more strictly, apply more of it to educational purposes, and apply it in the right way.

Such criticisms as these made the system appear very defective. Governor Wise was of the opinion that "it was originally devised and intended to defeat Mr. Jefferson's large and liberal plan of education." Attention therefore turned toward three questions of reform which the convention and the governor considered: the complete abolition of the principle of charity which the system had always contained; the establishment of expert supervision and instruction; and the creation of an affiliated system of schools providing for primary education, a system of higher schools, and for the training of teachers. On these suggested reforms a thoroughgoing plan was proposed to supersede the system then in operation and to correlate all educational

<sup>1</sup>The governor showed that it cost  $8\frac{1}{2}$  per cent to administer the fund.

agencies in the State under the supervision of the University. The plan included primary schools for the children between the ages of seven and twelve, higher primary schools for the children between twelve and sixteen, twelve colleges for the pupils above the ages of sixteen who were "fit for college, institute, and university," a medical college, a military institute, agricultural schools, and a university. The plan proposed to bring every small child within three miles of a primary school and every child between twelve and sixteen years of age within six miles of a high school. To complete the scheme three new colleges and schools for "instruction in all the applied sciences of agriculture" were to be established. Ignorance of agriculture, Governor Wise said, had ruined more men in Virginia than "any other cause known to me, except brandy, fox-hounds and horse-racing."

Practically all the suggestions and recommendations made by these conventions were incorporated in a series of resolutions which were to be sent to the next session of the Legislature. Chief among the resolutions was the following: "That the feature of charity to paupers in a system of public instruction ought to be abolished as odious to the people and degrading to the pupils." Steps were also taken to organize a teacher's association, and the evils resulting from the premature admission of students to the colleges and university of the State and the "ignorance and hopeless degradation" of infant operatives employed in cotton and woolen factories were also discussed. A memorial embodying the broad educational views of the conventions was prepared to be presented to the Legislature, and President William A. Smith of Randolph-Macon College was requested to appear before the Legislature in behalf of improved educational opportunity for the children of the State.

In spite of this manifestation of interest, however, practically nothing was achieved for substantial improvement in education during the closing years of the ante-bellum period. The president and directors of the literary fund, consisting of certain state officers, continued to act as the administrative authority of public



education in the State. The duties of these officers extended only to the investment and distribution of the revenue from this source. Beyond these duties the literary board had no authority in the various details of educational administration, which were left in large part to local county school commissioners who were appointed by the county courts and varied in number from two to thirty-two. The commissioners sought out the poor children of the community and placed them under the instruction of available teachers, who received from three to six cents a day for each child taught. The commissioners were required to visit the schools in which the beneficiaries of the literary fund were taught, but in this duty they were usually negligent. The support of schools was admittedly inadequate to the needs of the State; the plan lacked supervision and administration; there was throughout the period a strong prejudice against the plan, with its pronounced class distinctions, and there was much carelessness on the part of those who were intrusted with the few details called for by the school law. Despite all these defects and obstacles, however, the plan adopted in 1818 and the movement in 1829 and in the forties for district free schools served to give some education to thousands of children who would otherwise have been entirely neglected. In 1860 the State appropriated \$80,000 from the income of the literary fund, and nearly fifty thousand poor children were reported as having attended school an average of seventy-seven days in 3197 primary schools. The amount spent for their tuition and books and for the compensation of school officials was \$190,000.

Like Virginia, South Carolina also held back from establishing an adequate system of schools before the Civil War. The act passed in 1811 remained the basis of practically all that was attempted in that State before 1860, although supplemental legislation was enacted in 1835. The conditions which there prevented a response to the educational revival of the second quarter of the nineteenth century were not unlike those which retarded educational progress in Virginia during the same period.

The operation of the system set up in South Carolina in 1811 began clumsily, but with some promise of success. The reports to the Legislature for 1812 showed that less than two hundred schools with an enrollment of about forty-two hundred children had been established, maintained, or aided in that year by the legislative bounty. In his message to the Legislature that year Governor Middleton regretted that the free-school plan had met with such partial encouragement and success and suggested additional regulations and improvements for making the undertaking more successful. The following year a part of the Legislature was in doubt as to the practical operation of the law and sought to abolish the system inaugurated two years before. But for the plea of representatives from Charleston the plan would probably have been abandoned in its infancy.

In November, 1815, Governor David R. Williams believed that the lack of gratifying progress of the system was due to inexperience in its management and that with experience both the plan and its administration would be improved. He suggested that the commissioners be empowered to place poor children in school without the consent of those parents who were both unwilling and unable to educate them, and that a certain number of the more intellectually promising of such children be selected "as fit subjects for a course of collegiate training."<sup>1</sup> In 1816 the same executive urged the establishment of a permanent public endowment for school support and that certain lands acquired by negotiations with the Cherokee Indians be used as a nucleus of such a fund. Governor Andrew Pickens, in his message to the Legislature in 1817, said that the school law was not "sufficiently precise" and that abuses had crept in which demanded legislative correction. The recommendations of the various governors frequently appeared, but with varying degrees of urgency; while the annual legislative committee, appointed to examine the school commissioners' reports, too frequently damned the entire

<sup>1</sup>Here again may be seen the influence of Jefferson's early school plan in Virginia.

system by praising it faintly. Occasionally, however, this committee loudly praised the plan, as was the case in 1822, when it was declared that the system appeared not only to have met "the approbation of the citizens throughout the State" but to have "exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its original founders." Governor Thomas Bennett at that time admired the liberality of the Legislature, but deplored the misapplication of its bounty. He believed that the entire system should be cautiously examined, its imperfections ascertained and, as far as practicable, a remedy applied. His recommendations to the Legislature included the following:

While, therefore, I earnestly recommend the appointment of commissioners to examine the free-school system and detail to you minutely all errors existing in its organization or administration, permit me with deference to point out what I conceive to be radical imperfections. The distribution of the schools over the State is erroneously predicated on the estimate of taxation and population; hence schools are located in districts where the sums appropriated are more than sufficient for the education of those who are the particular objects of legislative care; while other and more populous districts are scarcely sensible of the benefits conferred. The location of the schools should depend wholly on the population to be instructed, and should be established on principles adequate to the object; if insufficient it will operate to produce hostility to the system, and as a waste of the sums appropriated. To effect this judiciously, I would suggest the appointment of a commissioner of the school fund, in whose judgment and discretion implicit confidence may be reposed whose duty it should be to visit every school and report their situation, annually to the Legislature. Another conspicuous error in the system, is the admission into the schools, free of any charge, of children whose parents are capable of procuring their instruction on other terms. The bounty of the State should not be permitted to paralyze individual exertion. The immediate effect of permitting the children of the rich to avail themselves of instruction at the free schools, is to deprive the State of those contributions which would extend their usefulness and respectability; and the valuable seminaries which private munificence would otherwise cherish. The State has, if not a qualified property, a deep interest in every child, and with parental solicitude, should enforce by

salutary enactments, the duty of cultivating their minds, on every parent who would resist the injunctions of moral obligation, or the suggestions of natural affection, by rearing their offspring in ignorance and vice.

During the next twelve years the several governors urged revisions of the school law and reforms of the system, which was believed to be "liable to essential abuses." But the Legislature remained inactive. In 1835 Governor George McDuffie commended the Legislature for its aid to the South Carolina College, but he rebuked that body for its constant neglect of the primary schools, in which "a great part of the community obtain all the instruction they ever receive at schools." Continuing, he said:

How vitally important then are these humble institutions in a community where the sovereign power of the State is not only recognized as residing in the body of the people, but is habitually exercised by them in the periodical election of their public functionaries? The deep importance of popular education to such a community is universally admitted; but we are unfortunately too prone, in conformity with our American habits, to rest satisfied with proclaiming the measures of speculative truth, without taking steps to have them exemplified by measures of practical wisdom. In no country is the necessity of popular education so often proclaimed, and in none are the schools of elementary instruction more deplorably neglected. They are entirely without organization, superintendence, or inspection of any kind, general or local, public or private. To the reproach of our republican institutions, it must be admitted, that some of the monarchies of Europe have manifested a more enlightened zeal in the cause of popular education, than has been exhibited in South Carolina. . . .

It is mortifying to reflect, that not one in twenty of those instructors, who have charge of our primary schools, and are thus invested with the sacred office of forming the minds of our children could stand the scrutiny through which every schoolmaster in Prussia must pass, before he is permitted to perform the very lowest functions of elementary instruction. A radical reform in this department of popular instruction is imperiously demanded by every consideration of patriotism, and although this salutary work must principally depend upon the exertions of individuals and local associations, the Legislature might give aid and direction to the popular efforts, by uniting the poor



schools with the common primary schools of the county, and increasing to a small extent the appropriation for the education of the poor. It seems to be generally admitted, that this charitable fund has been productive of very little public benefit, and has in fact been perverted, in many instances, into a provision for the support of indigent and incompetent schoolmasters. If all the judicial districts were divided into school districts of suitable dimensions, for primary schools, each of these selecting an intelligent school committee to superintend the business of primary education within its limits, the commissioners of the poor schools might be directed to apply a certain portion of the fund entrusted to their management, to the support of these schools, in such a way, and upon such conditions, as would increase the compensation, and at the same time insure the competency of the schoolmasters.

These suggestions are thrown out, rather as indicating what ought to be done, and to draw your attention to the subject of elementary instruction, than with the view of pointing out the specific plan by which it may be promoted. I am fully aware, that any reform in the system of primary schools to be extensively beneficial, must originate with the people, and be carried into execution by them in their respective vicinities. There is no field of exertion, public or private, in which the duties of the parent and the patriot can be so usefully and so honorably blended, as in the improvement, superintendence, and inspection of the primary schools; and it is to be hoped that every enlightened citizen will regard himself as a trustee of these elementary seminaries, and a guardian of the children educated in them.

One result of Governor McDuffie's argument in behalf of schools was the passage in 1835 of an act supplementary to the law of 1811. Its chief feature was a provision which was intended to make the earlier law more effective by prescribing penalties for negligence on the part of the school officials. Like the original act, however, it was full of defects and finally proved ineffective. The same governor urged the same subject the following year, calling the schools "the nurseries of freemen," but he was unable to induce legislative remedy for a condition generally considered unwholesome. In 1837 Governor Pierce M. Butler feared that the free-school system had not "fully answered the benevolent ends contemplated," and the following year he

reiterated the statement and urged the appointment of a legislative committee to study the subject and to make a report.

In compliance with the governor's request the Legislature appointed forty-six commissioners, representing every election district in the State, to examine and revise the free-school system and to make individual reports of any amendments to the school law or alterations in the administration of the system which they deemed needful. Twenty-six of the commissioners performed the duty with commendable zeal and some ability; and obeying a legislative resolution, Governor Patrick Noble in 1839 placed their reports in the hands of a special commission composed of Professors Stephen Elliott and James H. Thornwell, of South Carolina College, who were requested to study the reports and to devise and report to the Legislature an improved school plan. Among other things the plan which they reported called for a state superintendent of schools, provisions for training teachers, larger legislative appropriation for free-school purposes, and a sounder and more equitable basis for its distribution. The report reflected popular opinion concerning the system inaugurated in 1811 and enumerated its defects. It pointed out that regular returns from the school officials had been made in only five years and that in one year thirty-one of the forty-four districts failed to report. Moreover, the amount of money spent seemed to bear no satisfactory relation to the results obtained. In 1812 the sum of \$1 was expended for every child instructed, but seven years later the cost was \$16 for each child. Irregularity and inequality in the distribution of the funds appropriated by the Legislature were other evils which rendered the system ineffective. The average annual appropriation from the Legislature between 1811 and 1839 was \$37,000, while the average annual attendance was only about six thousand. One of the commissioners declared "there is nothing systematic in the whole scheme but the annual appropriation for its support."

Nothing resulted from this apparent evidence of interest, and although the subject of education continued to be urged, no

practical reforms were made. In 1845 the governor recommended a state superintendent as a step in the program of reform, but the legislative committee, to whom that part of the executive message was referred, returned the following answer:

Impressed by the sound views presented in the message, and concurring in these views almost entirely, the committee yet feel constrained by both the condition of the treasury, and the present circumstances of the people, to withhold the legislation which they otherwise would have proposed for your deliberation.

Two other evidences of educational interest appeared about this time. One of these was in the action of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina in 1846, and the other was the report of a legislative committee the following year. The Agricultural Society appointed a committee to report on the "defects of the present school system, and the changes necessary to insure the accomplishment of the end for which it was established," and the matter was referred to Colonel R. E. W. Allston, who reported in 1847. His analysis of the system established in 1811 pointed out four serious defects which made the plan lame and imperfect: the lack of a superintending head, of adequate support, of provisions for training teachers, and of provisions for furnishing the schools with books. The report considered the plan a failure and especially urged the appointment of a superintendent and the enactment of provisions for local taxation and for the preparation of teachers by a normal school "with a model school attached." It also pointed out that the adult white illiterates of the State numbered 20,000 and that there were 70,000 people in the State between five and twenty years of age who were not in school. None of the remedies could be effectually applied, however, "until the first great requisition shall have been satisfied by the appointment of a superintendent,—an active, intelligent, discreet and efficient officer."

About the same time a committee of five was appointed in the Legislature to make a report concerning education in the State.

As chairman of the committee Henry Sumner prepared and presented a very comprehensive and searching statement of actual educational conditions which coincided with the report of the State Agricultural Society and of all candid treatments of the subject. One part of the report stated:

Should not the State do more, much more than she has ever done for the cause of education among the poor, and among the people at large? It was declared, on the floor of this hall, during the last session of this body, that the free-school system was a failure, and no one contradicted it: It seemed to be conceded by all. . . . Reports on the free-school system, made at the session of 1839, have been before the people ever since without attracting one tithe of the attention which their importance demands. Let any dispassionate and candid individual examine these reports, and however much he may be disposed to laud this State, he will there find enough to make him blush for the neglect of the all-important cause of education. He will then see that resolution after resolution has been passed, approving the free-school system, and recommending that something be done to diffuse a greater amount of knowledge among the children in the State: and that committees were appointed, at different times, to report on this subject; yet nothing was done until the year 1839. Here this matter rested until the last session and we have stated what was then done.<sup>1</sup> Shall this also terminate, as almost all the other appointments, since the act of 1811, as splendid nothings? Is there not something due to the people of the State from the State? If the State has the right (as we believe she unquestionably has) to endow a college and to make annual appropriations for its support, should she not make a more liberal provision than she has yet done, for the purpose of diffusing the blessings of education among the people at large? Means should be adopted to secure these blessings to the people; for in this very thing, all the people, learned and ignorant, rich and poor, are equally and deeply interested.

The Sumner report also advocated and urged the appointment of a superintendent and the creation of a central board of education; the formulation of a well-ordered course of study for the

<sup>1</sup>At that time an increase of the annual appropriation for schools was proposed, and the discussion which grew out of the subject led to the appointment of the Sumner committee.



schools; and a substantial increase of the school funds by legislative appropriation and taxation, and a remodeling of the system and a distribution of the funds on the basis of white population rather than on the basis of legislative representation. Sumner emphasized the inequality of the method of distribution followed in the State at that time. Spartanburg District had five members in the House of Representatives and received \$1500 of the school funds; St. Phillip's and St. Michael's had seventeen representatives and received \$5100 of the funds. But Spartanburg District had more voters than St. Phillip's and St. Michael's. In conclusion the report said:

Many considerations press upon the State to arouse her from her lethargy, from her death-like torpor. If she does not awake from this torpor, she will "see men as trees walking," so far have her sister States of this Confederacy outstripped her in this career of glory. We have been talking and they have been acting. Let the State resolve to do the work, set about in good earnest, and the difficulties that now throng our way will yield to perseverance, and South Carolina will at last, though not too late, act worthy of her ancient dignity and honor. . . . There is scarce a State in the Union, in which so great apathy exists on the subject of the education of the people, as in the State of South Carolina. The States immediately adjoining us outstrip us in this benevolent and great work of diffusing knowledge among the people. South Carolina started well, but she has overlooked the importance of the work, and has lagged behind. Shall she continue in this state of listlessness and indifference to the wants of her children? She is a mother; and shall she withhold that which will satisfy these wants? Generous to a fault, she will not, cannot, when she sees that it is to her interest and her good that knowledge should be diffused among her people, and that the children in her borders should be made the recipients of her bounty. . . . Does the patriot desire that the institutions of our government should be perpetual? He ought to know that, without intelligence and virtue, such a government as ours cannot exist; for these are the main pillars, the foundation stones of the fabric of our government. Without intelligence to know our rights, and virtue to preserve them in their purity, demagogism may deceive the people under the fairest pretences of doing good, and betray the trust reposed; corruption will then prevail, and the security and liberty of

the people will be lost. But, on the other hand, with intelligence and virtue as safeguards, the people will be watchful of their rights, and the demagogue, though perhaps successful for a time, will be defeated in his attempts to deceive. Morality and good order may be expected from dissemination of correct principles, and our State will stand redeemed from the shame of being so backward in the promotion of a cause which promises so much good; . . . *Shall the people suffer for lack of knowledge? Let the State of South Carolina answer! Shall the wants of the people be satisfied? Then let the legislature do their duty!*

Such appeals, however, availed little and entirely failed in the effort to move the Legislature to action. When the Sumner report was made Governor Johnson said the school system of the State was "the very worst that can be conceived, and calls loudly for improvement." Governor W. B. Seabrook in 1850 held the same opinion. He had issued a circular to the school commissioners asking certain questions concerning the system, and from the answers received he learned that the plan was not successful except in densely settled communities, where the funds were made ample by combining the appropriation from the State with contributions from other sources, and that the teachers were poorly paid and generally "unqualified for their stations." The same governor had suggested the calling of an educational convention to meet at Columbia to consider the subject of schools, the preparation at home of books to be used in the schools, and other similar subjects. The convention was held, and "men distinguished for talent, character, and usefulness" took part in the proceedings and recommended practically the same plan for schools as that of the Sumner report and the message of Governor Seabrook. The only practical result or forward step which came from all this agitation of the subject, however, was the increase of the annual legislative appropriation from \$37,000 to \$74,000, and this was gained by a close vote and after a hard legislative fight in 1852.

With the exception of the increase of the state appropriation for free-school support no further legislative action was taken for

educational improvement before the Civil War. But the leaders did not abandon hope. In 1855 Governor Adams said, addressing the Legislature:

The free-school system will receive at your hands that consideration which its importance demands. Its results have fallen so far short of its object that it may be pronounced a failure. Its defects have been long felt, and yet nothing has been done except to double the sum of money to be wasted under a bad system. It requires thorough and entire reformation. It is unfortunate that the end which was evidently contemplated by the act of 1811 has been abandoned, and that what was evidently intended to introduce a general system of common schools has been perverted to the exclusive education of paupers. In my judgment we should return to the policy of 1811, and seek to inaugurate a system which, in its ultimate development, should bring the means of education within the reach of every family in the State.

It is interesting to note at this point that Governor Adams advocated a plan for the different degrees of education very similar to that suggested by Governor Wise and the convention in Richmond in 1857. It is also of interest that the South Carolina executive criticized the method of distributing the legislative appropriation just as the Virginia governor in 1857 criticized the management of the literary fund in his State. Governor Adams said that if South Carolina should decline to adopt the general system which he advocated and should continue to restrict its appropriation to the indigent, then the principle on which the legislative appropriation was distributed should be changed. He said that by that principle education was denied to one half the population of the State. Continuing, he said:

The other half who constitute our political vitality, are unequally distributed over the State; and it is this portion of our population whom it is our duty and our policy to educate. The distribution should be in proportion to white population. If the State undertakes to raise a fund to educate the poor, it should be spent where it is most needed. Under the present method, more money is allowed in one section for the education of five or six children, than in another for

ten or a dozen. In a matter of such vital importance to the State, district and parish lines should be disregarded. Whether we live in the mountains or on the seaboard, in the midst of light or surrounded by ignorance, we are all equally interested in the noble work, and into whatever benighted part of the State the rays of knowledge can be made to penetrate, we should feel as citizens of the same State, enjoying one renown, and linked to one destiny, that the partial blessing is the general good.

Governor Adams advocated the election of a state superintendent and provisions for other features of an improved school system. "Make at least this effort," he begged, "and you will at least feel conscious of having done your duty, and the public anxiety on the subject will be quieted." This urging had no effect on the Legislature, however, whose educational committee deemed it "inexpedient to propose any further legislation on the subject at present." The movement for reform continued to be agitated, however, until the Civil War, but reform never came. In 1860 the report of the legislative committee on education was similar to its reports thirty years before. It pointed out that the calculations of the free-school commissioners had been verified and found substantially correct, though some were deficient in form and others were received late. It was also noted that in some instances the amount expended for tuition had not reached the appropriation and that in others it had exceeded the appropriation. The report noted that although the method of distributing the appropriation, on the basis of representation in the popular branch of the Legislature, "may not in some respects conform to principle and exact equity, your committee are of opinion that this rule of distribution should be adhered to, as it approximates equality, probably as nearly as possible, and has been established and acted upon for a series of years."<sup>1</sup>

Thus the plan provided for in 1811 continued practically unchanged throughout the ante-bellum period. The lack of any central authority and of systematic and uniform management and the lack of provisions for local enterprise or community

<sup>1</sup> Reports and Resolutions of 1860, pp. 40, 41.



coöperation were among its chief defects. Moreover, the system was defective in principle; and the causes which principally obstructed improvement, in spite of frequent solicitude and exertions, were a mistaken spirit of economy and a division of opinion as to what should be the real object of the plan. Concerning the curriculum, methods of teaching, textbooks, qualifications of the teachers, and the physical equipment of the schools, there is but scanty information in the annual reports of the commissioners to the legislative committee. Finally, the defects of the plan were numerous, but it doubtless rescued many children from hopeless ignorance. Near the close of the ante-bellum period the following estimate was made of the system:

Considered in the light of an adequate provision for the elementary education of the people, the free-school system is chargeable certainly with gross and serious defects; considered as a scheme for the benefit of the poor and needy, it has just as certainly rescued thousands from the doom of hopeless ignorance, and been the first step in the ascent of others to honors, usefulness, and fame. It has let down a rope into the sinks of poverty by which a few gifted minds have been drawn up into the clear light and bracing air of learning, refinement and elegance. The ransom of these minds has been worth more than the whole amount appropriated by the commonwealth. Besides this, the free-school fund has been a blessing to the community at large in many neighborhoods, which were too thinly settled to support a teacher by their own contributions. The bounty of the State has eked out their deficiency, and kept up a good school where one could not otherwise have been maintained. In these respects the appropriation has not been in vain. It is the language of exaggeration, and not of truth and soberness, to condemn it wholesale, as an idle waste of the public money. It is something gained that there should be a standing confession of the obligation of the State to provide for popular instruction; something that thousands, to whom the book of knowledge would have been forever sealed, have been actually taught the rudiments of learning; and something better still, that here and there, a few generous minds had had a fire kindled within them, which never ceased to burn, until they themselves became lights in the world.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Free School System of South Carolina. Columbia, 1856. The author is not indicated.

In Charleston, however, the plan provided in 1811 was more successful and made a slight improvement before 1850. There the free-school commissioners had worked with more than usual zeal and interest in behalf of schools. Legislative authority was given to commissioners to raise by taxation funds for erecting houses and for launching a general school system. The sum of \$10,000 was thus raised, and the system was inaugurated in July, 1856. From that time until the Civil War Charleston had a creditable public-school system, adequately housed and properly superintended and taught, and with modest provisions for training teachers. Many of the wealthy citizens of the community patronized the schools, and in this way prejudice against the public-school idea was more or less weakened.

It was noted in Chapter V that the act of 1823 in Tennessee marked the beginning of an earnest effort to provide a system of public schools for that State, but that the plan provided by that legislation was defective in that it was obviously designed primarily for the education of poor children. However, this law served to stimulate a better educational sentiment, expressed in the law of 1827, which consolidated all school funds into one fund for the encouragement and support of common schools, and in the law of 1830, which made provisions for a more advanced school plan for the State.

The plan formulated by the law of 1830 seems to have been the germ of Tennessee's ante-bellum school system, and while it lacked central authority and machinery for enforcing its provisions, it undertook to get away from the pauper idea and to "induce universal attendance." Moreover, it undertook to provide for free textbooks and looked also in the direction of compulsory attendance. The law was intended to encourage and to support schools, however, rather than to establish and maintain them, and there seems to have been no complete or effective organization under this act. Up to that time the educational legislation of the State was largely financial in character, and the school funds were greatly decentralized and involved in the state bank,

through which a large part of that means of school support was lost. Between 1830 and 1836 there was but little educational legislation enacted in the State. During that time, however, Tennessee had succeeded in adopting a constitution which, for the first time, gave attention to public education and a permanent public-school fund,

The friends of education began in earnest soon after the adoption of the constitution in 1835, and in that year Governor Cannon recommended to the Legislature "the proper adaptation of measures to the existing state of society and habits of the people." He believed too much had been undertaken or more than could be achieved by the funds available, and he advocated a simple system which would place the means of education within reach "of that part of this rising generation who are entirely destitute and cannot obtain it from any other source." As a result of the agitation for increased educational opportunity the Legislature enacted another school law in 1836, which provided for a state board of education, a state superintendent of schools, and for centralizing all school funds. The plan thus provided was otherwise similar in detail to that formulated in 1830. Robert H. McEwen was elected superintendent of schools for a term of two years by a joint vote of the Legislature, at an annual salary of \$1500. The law gave him no authority to enforce the school laws or to stimulate and encourage educational advancement, but he was to serve the system as financial agent or treasurer of the school fund. McEwen's first report in October, 1837, dealt in the main with the condition of this fund, which he regarded as inadequate for the needs of the State. The report recognized the actual educational condition of the State, and the superintendent proposed to encourage the schools which then existed and gradually to expand them into a general system. Up to that time the actual organization of the system had not begun, the meager supply of teachers had to come through the academies and colleges, and individual effort and aid were necessary to support a working plan.

In 1838 the common-school funds and the academy funds were invested in the state bank, which was created at that time, and from this investment the sum of \$100,000 was to be appropriated annually for free-school support under "the pledge of public faith and credit of the State." At the same time the duties of the state superintendent were defined and provisions made for a more adequate school system. The superintendent was to manage and apportion the school funds on the basis of scholastic population. No apportionments were to be made to districts which neglected to report the required statistics nor to any which did not maintain a three months' school term each year. When the public funds were insufficient to maintain a school for three months the local school officers were empowered to levy rate bills on "parents, guardians, and others who may have derived benefit from the school by sending children thereto." However, these officers could exempt from the rate bills such poor persons "within the district as they shall think proper."

In his report for 1838-1839 Superintendent McEwen estimated the scholastic population at 185,000 and noted that many districts had elected school trustees in accordance with the law and that many schools had been established "under highly flattering auspices." He had confidence in the success of the system and urged the attention of the local officers to the proper location and construction of schoolhouses, recommending that the school apportionment be used for a while for those purposes. He also recommended that the local trustees be empowered to examine the qualifications of teachers, that local taxation be substituted for the rate bills to supplement funds necessary for a three months' term, that provision be made for educational agents to create interest in schools by addresses and lectures on the subject, and he asked authority to issue an educational journal.<sup>1</sup>

McEwen was elected for a second term, beginning February, 1838. But there was considerable discontent with his administration of the school funds between 1836 and 1838, and hints that

<sup>1</sup> Weeks, *History of Public School Education in Tennessee*, chap. iv.



he had been guilty of fraud led to a thorough legislative investigation. In November, 1839, a joint committee was appointed consisting of five members from the House and three from the Senate, and the result of the investigation was a majority report that McEwen had defrauded the school fund of about \$121,000.<sup>1</sup> When McEwen's term expired in February, 1840, legal action was instituted against him and his securities, and, after a litigation which continued for ten years and which wore the color of politics, final settlement was made with the defendants for the sum of \$10,797.86.<sup>2</sup> Meantime the school fund was taken out of the hands of the state superintendent and placed under the control of the state bank.

Robert P. Currin succeeded McEwen and served with great acceptability until November, 1841, when he resigned. On the same day that Currin's resignation was accepted Scott Perry was elected, after the legislative committee on education had reported unfavorably a proposal to abolish the office. Perry served as state superintendent until January, 1844, when, under a wave of economy and retrenchment, the office was abolished. The superintendent had been little more than a financial clerk, and the Legislature seemed unwilling to enlarge his authority or to expand his duties, which were now transferred to the state treasurer. Thus the wave of educational enthusiasm which began in the early thirties and continued for more than a decade was spent; the defalcation of McEwen gave public education a decided setback, its advocates became discouraged, and from 1844 to 1854 the poorly organized school system was little more than a name. The distributable share of the public funds to each district was small and was often applied to private schools, to which the people were greatly attached and which they viewed with

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Johnson was chairman of the committee from the House. A minority report was made by Felix Parker, a member of the committee from the House, which charged that the investigation was based on a "private malice and political prejudice spurred into activity . . . by hungry expectants and party hangers on."

<sup>2</sup> Journal of the House, 1843-1844, pp. 484-485.

confidence. To such schools the public funds were distributed on the basis of enrollment and credited to the tuition of those who would accept the aid. In this way the public-school fund "came to be regarded as a sort of charity fund."

In spite of the setback, however, educational interest appeared now and then, and improvement was occasionally urgently advocated. In April, 1847, an educational convention was held in Knoxville, with representatives from the counties of Greene, Cocke, Hawkins, Claiborne, Jefferson, Blount, Knox, Roane, Marion, and Anderson. A memorial to the Legislature was prepared which recommended property taxation for school support, state supervision, county supervision, examination and certification of teachers, the publication of a monthly educational journal, and other means of improving school conditions. In November of that year Governor Neil S. Brown, who was probably influenced by the memorial, indorsed the recommendation of the convention, especially urging taxation for education. This is said to be the "first deliberate recommendation of taxation" for public schools ever made in Tennessee. Brown advocated a county levy for schools equal to the sum received from the State, a principle of school support which at that time was proving very successful in North Carolina. Many of the governor's recommendations were incorporated in a bill, but the proposed legislation failed. Three years later authority was given incorporated towns to levy property, privilege, and capitation taxes for educational purposes on the direction of a majority of the legal voters. This was the first action in the State for school taxes, and, while its immediate value was small, it marked a step in the right direction.

In 1853 Governor Andrew Johnson said in his first message that the school system fell far short of the "imperative commands of the constitution" and that the Legislature and the people should "lay hold of this important subject with a strong and unfaltering hand." As a result an act was passed the following year which provided for a general capitation tax of twenty-five cents and two and one-half cents on the hundred dollars' valuation on

the taxable property of the State, to be levied and collected, as other state taxes, for school purposes. The funds thus raised and the \$100,000 which had been appropriated annually since 1839 from the income of the literary fund were to be distributed to the various counties on the basis of their scholastic population. Moreover, authority was given for a permissive county tax for schools, equal to the amount derivable from the state taxes, if legally ordered by the county courts or the people. By this legislation provisions were made for doubling the school funds. Provisions were later made for the examination and certification of teachers. In 1855-1856 a bill to establish a normal school to train teachers failed on the third reading on account of sectional jealousies in the State.

With the act of 1854 the popular wave in favor of schools, which had so noticeably declined in the forties, reached its culmination during the ante-bellum period. From that time until the outbreak of the war much more was achieved for public-school education than had been achieved before that time. The provisions of the law were more or less advanced for the time and the region, but the actual operation of the system which the law supported was disappointing; it was "an effort rather than an accomplishment, a promise rather than a fulfillment." The system lacked central supervisory authority, uniformity in the requirements for teachers, in the course of study, and in textbooks, and bore no relation to the State except that of receiving a certain financial aid. Moreover, the funds thus expended were, before 1854 at least, doubtless used to supplement and extend the terms of schools which were organized and conducted largely as private enterprises. In some of the larger towns, however, the correct principle of public educational support by public taxation was slowly being accepted at the outbreak of the war. Among them were Nashville, Memphis, and Clarksville, where creditable and more or less successful attempts were made for public schools before 1860.

Although North Carolina was the first Southern State to make constitutional provisions for schools, it was very slow to obey the

mandate of that instrument. The state university was chartered in 1789 and organized six years later, and a literary fund was established in 1825; but with these exceptions there was no further public educational legislation until 1839, when the first school law of the State was enacted. The State was therefore late in adopting a school plan, but its educational progress between 1840 and 1860 was so steady that it "was able to place on the ground beyond dispute the best system of public instruction in the fourteen Southern States east of the Mississippi previous to the outbreak of the Civil War."<sup>1</sup>

This record of achievement, however, was not easily made. When the school system was first introduced the people were "tenacious of old habits, conservative to the point of stubbornness," and the experiment was novel for that region. The possession of a large permanent fund for school purposes seemed for a time to serve as a strong and practical argument against taxation for public education, there were few means for training the teachers necessary for the success of the system, and many of the "old field" teachers looked jealously on the new system and sought to obstruct its progress. However, the school law was revised and improved from time to time, and the system gradually won friends and finally gained a large place in the public esteem. In 1841 considerable legislative improvement was made for the administration of the schools. Counties which had failed to adopt the school system in 1839 were by this act given opportunity to vote on the matter again, with the same privileges and rights allowed under the original act, and those which had voted against the plan were to have invested for them by the literary board whatever sums they would have been entitled to receive.

Until 1853, when a state superintendent was appointed, the chief defect of the system was a lack of central supervision and control. Until that time the literary board was the executive head of the schools, and the system was left largely to county

<sup>1</sup>Report of the United States Commissioner of Education, 1895-1896, Vol. I, p. 282.



officials who were not qualified by training or experience to guide the work wisely. Many other evils grew out of this fundamental defect. Returns of school statistics from the counties were irregular and incomplete, there was no provision for special reports from the literary board, and official information on the subject of schools was lacking. Different counties developed different habits in the control of the school work, and there was naturally but little tendency toward a state system. The law was permissive, and the local courts were often negligent in their duty of levying the school taxes, largely because the law made it a discretionary rather than an imperative duty to do so. Moreover, the element of charity was read into the public-school plan and noticeably hindered its development. Progress toward reform began to be made early, however, and criticisms of the organization, accountability, and management of the system led to measures in the late forties which looked to the appointment of a state superintendent. Finally, the office of superintendent was created in 1852, and Calvin H. Wiley was appointed to the position, which he filled with signal success until it was abolished in 1866.

It was under Wiley's leadership that the educational revival in North Carolina was promoted, and the history of schools in that State from 1853 to the Civil War is in large measure a part of his own biography. He was already widely known and popular in the State when he came to the office, and his resourcefulness, versatility, and indefatigable toil in that position gave a remarkable impetus to educational interest. During his thirteen years of active official service he labored consistently for a complete reorganization and improvement of the educational agencies of the State. His first care was to arouse interest in the cause of schools, and this he did by tours through the State and by educational campaigns which extended from the eastern to the extreme western counties. These trips were often made by private conveyance and at Wiley's personal expense; during his first year in office such campaigns called for fully half of his salary. Moreover, he did not always receive the encouragement which

his sacrifices and the interest for which he worked deserved. But his courageous heart was never daunted, and a new educational life in the State began gradually to show itself; hope was revived, new friends were made for the schools, and old friends "resolved to work with redoubled efforts."

One of the chief obstacles which hindered public educational progress in North Carolina in the early fifties was the scarcity of teachers. From the outset, however, Wiley undertook to increase the number and to elevate the standard of teaching qualifications. He also sought to induce women to become teachers because "they are more patient, more easily win the affections of the young, and are more likely to mold to virtuous and refined sentiments, the plastic nature of childhood." He also urged the formation of library associations for the State as a further means of improving the professional qualifications of the teachers, and his continued effort to encourage improvement in this part of the work finally led to the formation of the state teachers' association, which had a rather remarkable ante-bellum career.

The most interesting and valuable means of training teachers for the public schools of the State during the fifties was provided through the efforts of Braxton Craven, president of the Normal College, in Randolph County, from which institution Trinity College, now located at Durham, later developed. In 1850 Craven published in pamphlet form a comprehensive plan for training teachers which was widely distributed and which created in the State a strong opinion in favor of legislative aid for this work. In the same year legislative authority was given his institution to issue certificates to its graduates as "sufficient evidence of ability to teach in any of the common schools of this State, without reëxamination of the county committees." In 1852 the governor and the state superintendent were made ex-officio president and secretary of the trustees, and from 1853 until 1859—when the name of the school was changed to Trinity College and all state relations severed—Normal College continued its work of preparing teachers for the public schools of the State.

The teacher-training courses, which were of outstanding importance in the institution, required three years for completion, and in the promotion of this work Craven and Wiley coöperated fully for public education in the State.

The establishment of an educational magazine and the formation of a state teachers' association were other evidences of improvement in education in the State. For several years Wiley had advocated the creation of these auxiliary agencies, and both were promoted largely by his influence as superintendent of schools, as president of the teachers' association, and as editor of the teachers' journal. The journal first appeared in September, 1856, and the teachers' association was formed the following month. Both undertakings had highly creditable careers and rendered valuable educational service to the State before 1860.

Wiley found through his annual reports, which began in 1854 and continued through 1866, another effective means of encouraging reform and improvement. These reports were intended to give information concerning the condition of the schools and the progress they were making, to discuss the weaknesses of the system and to make suggestions for further improvement, and finally they were used as a means of creating and directing public opinion on the subject of universal and free education. And through his textbooks, especially "The North Carolina Reader," which went through several editions and became a standard for use in the schools, Wiley rendered still another important educational service.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the obstacles which confronted him Wiley's educational achievements will challenge a most favorable comparison with the work of any educational leader of the ante-bellum period. Before the outbreak of the Civil War his leadership was widely recognized and his services were greatly in demand in other States. Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia sought to copy the educational example of North Carolina, and Wiley was invited to

<sup>1</sup> This book appeared before Wiley was elected superintendent of schools. When he was elected to that position he disposed of his interest in the work.

appear before the Legislature of Georgia for the purpose of aiding that State in improving its school system. Just before the war the school system of North Carolina was attracting the favorable attention of the "States south, west, and north of us." In 1860 the scholastic population of the State numbered 221,000, and 150,000 children were enrolled in more than 3000 schools. More than 2700 teachers were licensed in that year, and more than \$100,000 was collected in local school taxes. The average monthly salary of teachers was \$28, and the average school term was four months. Teachers' salaries were larger and the school term longer in the State just before the war than at any time prior to 1900.

Although Georgia began its career as a member of the Union with promising educational prospects, its ante-bellum educational career was more or less disappointing. Its efforts for schools during the first half century of statehood were noted briefly in Chapter V, where it was pointed out that significant steps were taken before 1800 and again in 1817 and 1822, when important educational legislation was enacted. It was the act of 1822, however, which became the basis of public educational effort in the State throughout most of the ante-bellum period. Although this effort was more or less feeble, it marked a step in the direction of state support of public education, and in it the State appeared partially committed to that principle.

In 1825 Governor G. M. Troup said, when he addressed the Legislature, that institutions for the instruction of youth were multiplying in "every quarter of the State, founded either by public or private contribution," and that the county academies were increasing in numbers and respectability and were generally sustained by public favor. The poor-school fund was eagerly sought by the various counties, he said, "but whether beneficially applied in all, is doubtful." He recommended that such general permanent regulations be adopted for that part of the system as would accommodate the schools to local conditions. Other executives recommended from time to time that more legislative



attention be paid to public education, but practically no changes were made in the provisions for schools between 1822 and the late thirties.

In 1836 one third of Georgia's share of the surplus revenue was set apart for school purposes, and a joint legislative committee of five was appointed to digest and present an adequate school plan for the State. The report of this committee recommended the adoption of a plan similar to that in operation in some of the Middle and Eastern States and urged the elimination of the principle of charity, which had up to that time so seriously weakened Georgia's public educational provisions. About the same time Governor Schley said, in his message to the Legislature, that the school system of the State was "radically defective." The distinctions made between those who accepted the benefits of the academy fund and those who were aided by the poor-school fund were "invidious and insulting"; and he regarded it highly improper, while attempting "to aid the cause of education, to say to a portion of the people, 'you are poor.'" The governor noted that thousands of honest, patriotic, and valuable citizens were refusing the bounty and despised the hand that offered it, because it was accompanied with insult. He urged the consolidation of the academy fund and the poor-school fund into a general educational fund to be used for promoting primary education.

As a result of the governor's recommendations and the report of the committee, which was somewhat modified by the Legislature, an act was passed in 1837 providing for a more or less advanced system. The academy fund and the poor-school fund were combined and, with the interest on one third of the surplus revenue, were to constitute a general fund for school purposes. The following year the law was somewhat modified, and permission was given the county courts, on the recommendation of the grand jury, to levy an extra county tax, not to exceed 50 per cent of the general tax, to be added to the general school fund. The acts of 1837 and 1838 were without any general effect, however, and in 1840 they were repealed, and the funds set apart

by them for school purposes were designated as a poor-school fund. Three years later the school law was further amended, in an act to provide for the education of the poor, and the county courts were given permission, with the approval of the grand jury, to levy and collect an extra tax which, "with such funds as may be received from other sources," would be sufficient to educate the poor children of the counties. Local officers were to furnish the courts with the names of all such children between the ages of eight and sixteen "as may need total or partial assistance in obtaining their education"; and commissioners were to be appointed to superintend, without compensation, the proper application of the funds and the education of the poor and to formulate such regulations as would promote the objects of law. Under these provisions the public-school work of the State was carried on during the remainder of the ante-bellum period.

The duties of the local officers provided for under the act of 1843 were frequently not observed. Returns of poor children were often entirely neglected, and the returns which were made were generally imperfect and incomplete. Not more than three fourths of the poor children were reported, and of that number only about half were sent to school; and those who were enrolled attended school less than four months a year. Fifteen counties made no returns in 1850, and although the law provided that counties neglecting that duty could participate in the distribution of the income from the school fund on the basis of the last return, eight counties in that year received no apportionment because they had never made returns of school statistics. In one year only fifty-three of the ninety-three counties of the State applied for their apportionment of the fund.

Lack of central supervision, however, was perhaps not the chief weakness of the plan. Like the plans experimented with in several other States before 1860 the plan in Georgia was defective in principle. The poor-school system worked a gross injustice to the poorer counties, which usually had the largest number of poor children and the least ability to provide for their education.

For example, the counties of Jasper and Newton, which had about one hundred and twenty poor children, in one year paid into the state treasury taxes amounting to \$8910; while the counties of Gilmer and Union paid only \$1594 in taxes and reported more than twenty-eight hundred children who were entitled to participate in the benefits of the school fund.

Efforts were made in 1845 and again in 1858 to inaugurate an adequate public-school system in Georgia, but the attempts failed. An enthusiastic educational meeting, attended by delegates from sixty counties, was held in Marietta in the late fifties to consider the subject of schools, and an interesting and significant address was prepared for the people of the State. The convention recommended a central board of education, a state superintendent, adequate school support, the preparation of teachers, and other features of a sound school plan. Near the close of the ante-bellum period a meeting of the friends of education was held in Atlanta during the exhibition of the "Southern Central Agricultural Society," and a memorial was prepared to be presented to the Legislature in behalf of better educational opportunity. The memorial asked for schools "to which the children of the poorest citizens shall be sent, without submitting parent or child to the jeer of pauperism. . . . School houses which shall awaken a feeling of pride in every neighborhood, and cause the richest to feel that no private teaching can afford equal advantages to the common-school. . . . We must have *free public schools* in every school district in Georgia." The memorial urged taxation and other progressive educational features. In 1858 Governor Joseph E. Brown urged the Legislature to establish "a practical common school system" and recommended that a large sum of money be appropriated for that purpose. His message was vigorous and influenced the Legislature to set apart the sum of \$100,000 annually of the earnings of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, which was the property of the State, to be devoted to promoting common-school education. This legislation indicated a large interest in education and contemplated the creation of a

complete school system, and a promising school plan was in the making when it was interrupted by the war.

Georgia was therefore unable to establish such an ante-bellum school system as its early educational effort promised. At best the plan most generally adopted before 1860 was a decentralized, permissive county system. In each county there was a board of education whose chief members were the treasurer of the school fund and a commissioner appointed by the county court; this board issued a permit or license "to almost any person, authorizing said person to teach when, where, and how he or she may please." As a rule the teacher provided his or her own schoolhouse and equipment and received "seven cents a day for each pupil in actual attendance." The teacher filed his account with the county officer at stated times and received his compensation from the quota which came to the county from the annual distribution of the school fund. In general the public conceded that the State might "with measurable propriety," make provision for the education of those children whose parents were too poor to pay tuition fees in private schools, but the principle of public education by state support and control had not yet been fully accepted in Georgia. Largely for that reason the so-called "poor schools" were set up in that State, and if they had not contained the element of charity the ante-bellum practice would doubtless have been productive of greater usefulness. In 1859 the children entitled to participate in the poor-school fund numbered about 130,000, and about 72,000 were taught by its aid.

Louisiana did not come into the Union until 1812, but the territorial Legislature had shown some interest in education, and a very ambitious educational plan had been outlined and set up in 1805, when provision was made for the University of Orleans. The following year a public-school law was enacted, though it had only a short life; but during the next quarter of a century the more influential citizens showed an interest in efforts to establish schools. In 1833 the secretary of State was made ex-officio state superintendent of public schools, and interest in



education during this so-called beneficiary period became widespread and more or less effective. From time to time the governor of the State recommended the abolition of the subsidized parochial system of academies and private schools (see Chapter IV) and the substitution of a thoroughgoing public-school system. In 1841 New Orleans was given authority to establish a complete system of public schools, with a superintendent and support by public taxation, and in a few years the public schools of that city compared favorably with the best city systems in the country. Its educational work continued to grow and, before the war, served as a good example to other towns and cities in the South.<sup>1</sup>

Louisiana had no constitutional provisions for education, however, until 1845. In that year a commission was appointed to improve and extend the school system, and the first step was taken when advanced provisions for education were incorporated in the new constitution adopted at that time. The instrument provided for a state superintendent, for a permanent public-school fund, and for legislative establishment of public free schools and "for their support by taxation on property, or otherwise." This was one of the most advanced constitutional provisions for public education to be found in any State at that time. In 1846 Governor Isaac Johnson, in his message to the Legislature, recommended the establishment of free public schools and institutions of higher learning. A committee on public education was accordingly appointed, and in 1847 Louisiana passed its first free-school law, which was likewise advanced for the time. An annual tax of one mill on the dollar on all taxable property in the State was to be levied and collected, and later a capitation tax of one dollar on each and every free white male inhabitant above twenty-one years of age was also levied.

The funds thus raised were to be supplemented by the interest on the permanent public-school fund, and such revenues were to be apportioned by the state superintendent to the various parishes

<sup>1</sup>Henry Barnard assisted in preparing the plan for, and was offered the superintendency of, the New Orleans schools.

in proportion to the scholastic population of each. Local school directors or trustees were provided for, and these officers were to appropriate to the support of free schools the funds coming to their districts, together with such funds as were derived from the rents or sales of their school lands. These officers had full authority over the local schools and were required to make annual reports to the parish superintendent concerning certain scholastic statistics—the amount of school funds apportioned to the district, the number and term of each school taught, the enrollment, the course of study, and the salaries paid teachers. The parish superintendents, who were elected by the people and commissioned by the governor, were required to make similar annual reports to the state superintendent. They acted as treasurers of the parish funds, stood between the local school trustees and the state superintendents, and were required to visit the schools and to examine and license the teachers, to fill vacancies in the local boards of trustees, and to appoint such boards when the people failed to elect them. The salary of these officers was fixed at \$300 annually. The local trustees were given authority, with the consent of a majority of the voters in the district, obtained after sufficient public notice, to levy a local property tax for building and furnishing schoolhouses. The state superintendent was required to visit the various parishes each year to inspect the schools for the purpose of awakening interest in education, and to make annual reports to the Legislature concerning the public education in the State.

Alexander Dimitry was selected as the first head of the system in 1847 for a term of two years and at an annual salary of \$3000. This was the largest salary paid to a state superintendent of schools at that time. Dimitry was widely known as a scholar and teacher and was eminently qualified for the important and difficult duties of this office. Up to this time such public schools as had existed in Louisiana had been under the direction of the secretary of State. But only a small success had been achieved. As early as 1842 the police jurors (who were county officers of

the State) were authorized to levy a tax for schools not to exceed one half of the annual state tax; and although large sums of money had been expended for so-called public education the plan in use before 1847 was so defective that the ex-officio state superintendent declared it should be consigned to "an unhonored grave."

The task before the superintendent was, therefore, very difficult. However, his first report, which was made in 1848, showed that the parishes had been laid off into districts and that the system had begun with some promise of success. There was indifference, and hostility occasionally revealed itself, especially against the law for levying local school taxes. Yet a large part of the scholastic population was enrolled in school, and in 1849 the sum of \$328,000 was appropriated for free-school support. In 1850 there were 692 school districts, with 618 schools, in which 22,000 children were receiving instruction. Two years later the number of public schools in the rural section of the State reached 647, and more than half of the scholastic population was in attendance. In some communities high schools were reported.

Certain legislative changes were made in the fifties which were not without their influence on the school system. The method of selecting the state superintendent was changed from appointment by the governor to popular election, and his salary was reduced to \$1500 a year. The office of parish superintendent was abolished and a nonsalaried board of district directors substituted. These changes seriously crippled the system outside of New Orleans and added ground for complaint against the school plan. One complaint heard in the late fifties was against the local directors, who often appeared to have little interest in their work. Complaints also "came from many of the parishes that the teachers appointed were not only incompetent, but often drunkards and unprincipled adventurers."<sup>1</sup> Wherever these conditions

<sup>1</sup>Ficklen, *The Origin and Development of the Public-School System in Louisiana*.

were found many parents demanded and "obtained their children's quota of the public-school funds, which they used in part payment of the salaries of private tutors and governesses." This method of expenditure of public-school money was very unwholesome and "worked great injustice to the poorer classes." From a statement made in the report of the state superintendent in 1859 there appeared a more or less representative description of conditions in a large part of the State at that time :

Under the present law nearly every planter has a school at his house and draws the pro rata share out of the public treasury. The poor children have not the benefit of these schools, and in this parish, which pays about \$14,000 in school tax, there is consequently not enough in the treasury to pay the expense of a single school at the parish seat, where it ought to be.

Considering the obstacles confronting the plan and the conditions just described, the system set up under the law of 1847 achieved a marked degree of success. Private schools were numerous and excellent, and where "public schools were established teachers of inferior skill were employed." Local officers were often careless, and seeing that the wealthy and influential planters were satisfied, the Legislature confined its action to the appropriation of "ample funds, which often never reached the schools" for which they were intended. This source of public-school support was generally very liberal; from 1847 to 1861 the sum of \$3,840,000 was appropriated for that purpose, and the Confederate Legislature of 1862 appropriated \$485,000 for public schools. At the outbreak of the war fully half of the scholastic population of the State outside of New Orleans was in public schools. In that city public graded schools had been in operation for several years and had attained a very marked degree of success.

There were only a few schools in Mississippi before 1795, but by 1800 several private schools seem to have been set up, and in 1801 a "public female school" was opened, although this was very likely supported by tuition fees. In 1802 Jefferson College was



chartered by the territorial Legislature and opened nine years later. In 1817 the territory which included the present State of Mississippi was admitted to the Union. The constitution adopted in that year contained the educational provision of the Northwest Ordinance of 1789, and this provision was continued in the constitution of 1832 and of 1865: "Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government, the preservation of liberty, and the happiness of mankind, schools, and the means of education, shall forever be encouraged in this State."

At the first meeting of the Legislature, in 1818, provision was made to take care of the sixteenth-section lands, which had already been set apart for purposes of education, and the county courts were authorized to provide one or more schools in each county "as they should deem right and useful." In 1821 a fuller educational act was passed creating a literary fund and providing for county school commissioners, who were to distribute the proceeds of the fund for the education of poor children, who, with the consent of their parents or guardians, were to be selected by the commissioners to be taught reading, writing, and arithmetic. These county school officers were to visit and examine the schools, to examine into the qualifications of the teachers, and to collect and report certain educational statistics in their various counties. Three years later further legislation was enacted for the management of schools, making the township the educational unit of the State. In 1833 another school law was passed which dealt in the main with the literary fund and the annual distribution of its income, which was to be used for the education of poor children. Up to that time the so-called public schools of the State had been established and aided by funds arising from the leases or sales of the sixteenth-section lands, which had been donated by Congress, and by the small income from the literary fund established in 1821.

In the early forties the subject of public schools was greatly agitated, the question being stirred by a discussion of the sixteenth-section lands and by the tide of immigration and the resulting rapid increase in illiteracy. This agitation was enlarged by the

work of Governor A. G. Brown, who had broad educational sympathies and who, before his election as the chief executive of the State, had urged the establishment of public free schools for all the children. His inaugural address in 1844 contained an earnest and eloquent plea for public education, and although his appeal failed to secure immediate legislative action, it created a healthy educational interest. During the following years this interest reflected itself in the newspaper of the State. Moreover, local organizations of the Whig and of the Democratic party resolved in favor of public schools, which became a striking feature of the campaign. In 1846 Governor Brown made another appeal to the Legislature, and that body responded with an act of March 4 of that year. This was the first law enacted in Mississippi looking to the establishment of a general system of public schools.

The law provided for local school commissioners, to be appointed by the boards of county police and to have charge of schools in their local districts. They were to license and make contracts with teachers and to have general control of the local schools. The compensation of the teachers was to come from the county funds, which consisted of the sixteenth-section funds, escheats, fines, forfeitures, and certain license taxes. To the funds arising from these sources were to be added also certain special school taxes which the commissioners were empowered to levy with the written consent of a majority of the heads of families in each township. The commissioners were required to collect and report statistics concerning the schools to the secretary of State, who was made ex-officio superintendent of public education. Like the ante-bellum school laws of many States this act was weakened by its extremely permissive features and its lack of provision for strong central supervision. Any township could be exempted from the provisions of the act if a majority of the heads of families should file a written protest with the county board of police before a certain date each year. Moreover, the power to raise local school taxes was so permissive as to work its own defeat. The law failed also to repeal previous educational

legislation, and this neglect gave rise to puzzling and complicated constructions. In spite of all these defects, however, the law was not entirely without force and value. It was a step in the right direction and served as a not altogether unworthy beginning, remaining, with a few slight revisions, the basis of public educational effort in the State until the war.

But the plan created by this act failed to meet the full expectations of its friends, and in 1848 Governor Brown urged its revision or repeal and the substitution of a more adequate plan. But the Legislature did not act on the suggestion. Instead, four separate acts were later passed, and each of them provided for a different school plan. One law applied to six counties, another to five, the third to seven, the fourth to seventeen, and the law of 1846 was in force in the remaining counties. During the remainder of the ante-bellum period the evil of local and privileged educational legislation continued. The following excerpt from the report of the ex-officio superintendent for 1851 serves as a good illustration of this condition, which continued to prevail until the war:

At the session of the legislature in 1850 special acts upon the subject of the schools were passed for a large number of counties. The special legislation upon this subject has virtually repealed the law providing for a general system of common schools in the State. On examining the various laws upon this subject, repeals and reënactments, special and supplemental laws, the subject is thrown into such a state of confusion that it is difficult to tell what the law is. In December, 1849, my predecessor made an elaborate report to the governor in which he states that in his previous report he was able to report from one-fourth of the counties in the State, and regrets that in his present report he could present the condition of schools in only eleven counties. And I now have to report that during the last two years returns from three counties only have been made to this office. This is owing to the special laws passed for most of the counties which are not required to report the condition of the schools to the secretary of State. It is not so much my purpose to make a report upon schools as to show why I have not done it, and also to show due respect to those counties who have made their reports.

Some slight ante-bellum educational growth in Mississippi was noticeable, however, even with the ruinous policy of special legislation in the way. In 1840, for example, there were 382 common schools with more than 8000 pupils reported in the State. Ten years later the common schools numbered 762 with 826 teachers and nearly 19,000 pupils. The total expenditures for common schools that year were about \$254,000, and more than \$66,000 came from public funds and taxes. In 1860 there were 1116 common schools in the State with 1215 teachers and an enrollment of about 31,000. The sum of \$385,000 was expended for common schools, but three fifths of this expenditure came from tuition fees.

Alabama came into the Union in 1819 with a rather creditable constitutional provision for schools. Legislation enacted in that year looked to the promotion of public schools to be supported by the proceeds of the sixteenth-section lands, but this law seems to have been without any very great effect. In 1823 further legislation was enacted which provided for local trustees, who were to build schoolhouses, to examine and employ teachers, and to report those pupils who were to be admitted to the schools free of charge. Poor children were to be received at the expense of the district or county, while those who were able to do so paid a tuition fee—a practice which prevailed throughout the so-called experimental period. By act of 1839 the state bank, which held the permanent public-school fund of the State, was directed to pay the sum of \$150,000 annually for school support, and this amount was increased to \$200,000 in 1840. By the law of 1840 no township could receive more than \$400, and this assistance seems to have been furnished only after certain sums (usually about one third of the amount given by the State) had been subscribed and collected locally. Moreover, it appears that the law assumed that the schools should be actually taught in advance of state aid, and it is evident that the purpose of the law was to stimulate local initiative and community enterprise. However, no citizen was entitled "to an amount exceeding the amount" which he



actually subscribed, but poor children were to be educated free of charge. This State, therefore, also looked primarily to the education of the poor.

Direct aid from the profits of the state bank, however, did not long continue. The proceeds of the land sales were carelessly invested, and a large part of the school fund was lost (see Chapter V). Efforts were made, however, throughout the forties and in the early fifties to bring about improvement. Legislative committees reported eloquently on the necessity of public schools, but regretted that heavy public burdens prevented any state aid to them. State taxation was urged, however, and the appointment of a state superintendent was recommended; and a bill was presented at the Legislature of 1851-1852 authorizing the appointment of such an officer, but the bill failed. At that time there was a scholastic population of about 100,000 in the State, but there were only about 1152 public schools, with 1195 teachers and nearly 29,000 children. Hundreds of communities were entirely without schools, although in "rare cases enterprising teachers succeeded in arousing a strong local interest and in building up what might be termed country academies, in which the classics and sciences were taught, and aspiring young men received their preparation for college."

A marked change was taking place in the early fifties, however, and there appeared a rather wholesome sentiment for public schools. In the Legislature of 1853-1854 Robert M. Patton (who later became governor of the State), Alexander B. Meek (who was a prominent "lawyer and judge, editor and legislator, poet and soldier"), and Jabez L. M. Curry (who later became the general agent of the Peabody Fund) worked for educational improvement and were instrumental in the passage of the law of 1854, which became the basis of a creditable school system through the remainder of the ante-bellum period. The law created an educational fund and provided for a state superintendent, county school commissioners, and local township trustees, the examination and certification of teachers, and authority for the counties to levy

a property tax for school support. There was no direct state taxation for schools, although the law provided for an annual appropriation of \$100,000 from the state treasury for that purpose, and this sum necessarily came from taxes. Dr. Stephen B. Weeks says<sup>1</sup> that the law showed "a grasp of educational problems, a comprehension of school difficulties and school needs and a modernity of methods and aims that are truly astonishing."

William F. Perry, a man of long and successful teaching experience, was selected as the first state superintendent and began immediately to set in motion the splendid school plan. Local officers were slow to learn the importance of making returns of school statistics, and Perry seemed discouraged. In his first report he said that three fourths of the children of the State were either entirely without instruction "or have been crowded into miserable apologies for schoolhouses, without comfortable seats, without desks or blackboards, often without the necessary textbooks, and still oftener without competent teachers." But he believed that the majority of the people looked upon the school system with much favor and would soon lend their aid to promote its efficiency. A large number of schools had been established, and while the school system had not been so successful as its advocates had hoped, in some parts of the State it had worked well and was productive of good. The superintendent outlined a wide course of study, recommended grading and classifying the pupils, and suggested a list of textbooks. He also recommended a list of books for the teachers.

The law was revised in 1856 and the school system greatly improved. The scholastic population in that year was about 171,000, and nearly 90,000 children were enrolled in more than 2200 schools which had an average term of about six months. In that year the sum of \$474,000 was expended for public-school support. Perry, who served as superintendent until September, 1858, constantly directed attention to improvements in the

<sup>1</sup>History of Public School Education in Alabama, p. 63.

construction and furnishing of schoolhouses, in the qualifications of teachers, and the need for enlightening public opinion. Public sentiment gradually developed in favor of schools, but there were numerous ill-wishers who welcomed every opportunity to attack the state system. There was also a lack of sufficient central authority to compel the local officers to conform to all the requirements of the law, and the result was carelessness and indifference, which were universal obstacles to ante-bellum educational effort. However, the Alabama Educational Association was formed in 1856, to have several successful and influential meetings before the war, and numerous local educational associations were also organized. The *Alabama Educational Journal*, established by Superintendent Perry in January, 1857, also rendered a valuable service to the school interests of the State during its short career. These and other agencies greatly aided in the development of a sound educational sentiment.

Gabriel B. Duval succeeded Perry as superintendent September 1, 1858, and served until 1864. Under his administration considerable educational progress was made. Growth was slow but steady and consistent. Counties rapidly became well organized, schools continued to be increased, "and it would appear that the public funds were expended in the way least likely to emphasize the pauper school idea." Public funds were used, however, to "supplement private endeavor," and this plan was so successful that in 1858 the average school term was more than six months and in Pickens County the schools were reported open all the year. Duval made his last report in 1859, and at the outbreak of the war went to the front as captain of a volunteer company; in his absence his educational duties were performed by his chief clerk, W. C. Allen. In March, 1864, Duval seems to have resigned as superintendent, and Allen served as head of the state school system until January, 1865, when he was succeeded by John B. Taylor.

Throughout that stormy period the schools continued to operate with surprising consistency. In 1861 the total expenditures

for school purposes were about \$284,000, and in 1865 about \$113,000. The schools were kept open until the appointment of a provisional governor in July, 1865, although "amidst embarrassments incident to a state of fierce warfare," said Superintendent John B. Ryan in April, 1866. The records and papers of the superintendent's office "were carted about the country in boxes" (to keep them from the hands of spoilers) during most of the time after 1863. The people seemed determined to keep the schools open as long as possible. On this point the following letter of March 11, 1865, from State Superintendent Taylor to W. H. Huston, superintendent of Dallas County, has interest:

I am much gratified to learn from your letter of the 8th inst. that the absorbing and engrossing interest of the times and the perilous condition of the country have not retarded the educational interests of the populous and wealthy country which you represent, and that parents evince an "enthusiastic interest in the education of their children." Of a truth "*Carpe diem*" should be the motto of our people at this time, for "we know not what the day may bring forth," nor how soon present advantages may pass away before the invasion of a ruthless foe, or how even their sons may be called away from the pursuits of learning to the more immediate and pressing necessity of defense.

I trust that the wisdom of Congress may adopt some plan whereby disabled soldiers and officers, unfit for duty in the field, may be retired, and thus competent instructors from among the educated take their places as instructors of the rising generation. An accomplished officer, formerly a teacher, and now himself maimed and unable to resume his command, informed me that there are many such now spending their time in idleness or assigned to duties for which they are incompetent. He also stated that he had mentioned the matter to members of Congress and that he hoped they would take such action as would lead to beneficial results. Let us then wait in hope.

I am pleased with your plan for procuring schoolbooks and trust you will meet with eminent success. It should certainly be adopted in every county when practicable, and has been acted upon to some extent by the booksellers of this city.

Professor B. T. Smith, of Central Institute, is now engaged upon an abridged arithmetic for the use of public schools and has completed



the work as far as division. When that is completed I shall request him to publish, if a publisher can be obtained, leaving the remainder for a future edition. This part will answer for primary classes and will supply a present want. If encouraged in this undertaking, the professor will enter upon abridgments of other schoolbooks.

You will oblige me by giving me notice of the time and place of holding your county convention. It is my desire to visit as many as the limited time at my command will permit.

Arkansas was organized as a territory in 1819 and was admitted as a State seventeen years later. Under territorial legislation enacted in the early thirties provision was made for taking care of the school lands and the funds arising from rent or sales of these lands, and a slight beginning was made for public schools. During a large part of the ante-bellum period the academy was used for immediate educational needs, although during that period the principles of public education were gradually being accepted. In 1829 schools were reported in "almost every township of the few counties that constituted the territory." Some of these were private schools "taught by old-field schoolmasters, well-educated men," while others were under the direction of the county courts and were supported by tuition fees and the funds arising from the school lands.

In 1836, when Arkansas came into the Union, its constitution said:

Knowledge and learning generally diffused through a community being essential to the preservation of a free government, and diffusing the opportunities and advantages of education through the various parts of the State being highly conducive to this end, it shall be the duty of the General Assembly to provide by law for the improvement of such lands as are, or hereafter may be, granted by the United States to this State for the use of schools, and to apply any funds which may be raised from such lands, or from any other source, to the accomplishment of the object for which they are or may be intended. The General Assembly shall from time to time pass such laws as shall be calculated to encourage intellectual, scientific, and agricultural improvement by allowing rewards and immunities for the promotion

and improvement of arts, science, commerce, manufactures, and natural history, and countenance and encourage the principles of humanity, industry, and morality.

In his inaugural address James S. Conway, the first governor of the state, urged the examination and collection of all materials "calculated to enlighten the public mind and diffuse general and useful knowledge," believing that the State had ample means to establish schools to "insure universal education of the youth of our country." Educational interest gradually increased, and in 1843 a law was passed to establish a system of public schools in an effort to unite all the educational forces of the State. Provision was made for local school trustees, who were to have control of the school funds, to build schoolhouses, to employ competent teachers, and to provide for a four months' school or schools in each township, in which "orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography, arithmetic, and good morals" were to be taught. Provision was also made for a state board of education, for a board of county school commissioners for each county, and for the purchase of books to be used in the common schools of the State. The schools were to be supported by the fund created from the sixteenth-section lands and by private contributions, and children whose parents were unable to contribute were classed and educated as "indigents." The principle of state or local taxation for school support was absent.

The legislation proved defective and impracticable, and in 1846 Governor Drew said that the plan had "not been carried into successful operation." Three years later another school law was passed and the sum of \$250,000 was appropriated to carry out its provisions, but this seems to have been nothing more than a paper appropriation.<sup>1</sup> Still further legislation was enacted in 1851 in an effort to consolidate and to improve the school system of the State, but the provisions were not altogether unlike those of previous legislation. Governor John S. Roane, in his

<sup>1</sup>Weeks, *History of Public School Education in Arkansas*, chap. iii.

message to the Legislature in 1852, was "convinced from a careful investigation into the history of common schools and other public institutions of learning in other new States, and the practical operation of this law here at home, that no possible good has come of it, or even can result to the State, or any considerable portion of the people." He urged immediate legislative improvement, and largely as a result of his recommendations a more advanced law was passed in 1853 which improved and reaffirmed some of the provisions of the earlier laws. The secretary of State became ex-officio state superintendent of schools, and provision was made for county school commissioners, who were ex-officio county superintendents, and for local trustees. But there was no provision for taxation for school support. With this exception, however, the law of 1853 tended toward centralization and promised a degree of success, although in practical operation the system thus established was more or less disappointing to the advocates of public education in the State.

David B. Greer, the secretary of State and ex-officio state superintendent of schools, made his first report in 1854. At that time only a few counties had made reports, and many probably "had no school organization whatsoever under the law then in force." Greer saw "a gloomy picture" in the school conditions of the State, but he thought the "friends of education should not be discouraged." Arkansas had encountered the same difficulties in its public educational enterprises which had confronted all the new and sparsely settled States. Chief among these obstacles was the lack of a sound and adequate means of school support and "the indifference that pervades the public mind on the subject of education." To overcome these difficulties Greer urged state taxation and the appointment of a capable man for state superintendent to go among the people and stimulate educational interest. Governor Elias N. Conway urged, in his message to the Legislature in 1854, that the capitation taxes be appropriated for educational purposes. For want of adequate means only a few schools had been established under the law of 1853.

Greer's report for the years 1854-1856 showed that reports had been received from only half the counties of the State, and these were vague, inexplicit, and unsatisfactory. Few statistics were given. It was estimated that there were only about twenty-five common schools in the State which were maintained by the public-school fund, and Greer believed that the attempt to organize and establish such schools was almost an entire failure. Conditions began gradually to improve, however, even though the school plan was defective in principle. In 1860 there were about seven hundred and fifty common schools in operation in the State, with nearly twenty thousand children in attendance. It appears that the average monthly salary paid teachers was about \$27. Besides the common schools there were more than a hundred academies, on which Arkansas depended in great measure for its chief source of education throughout the ante-bellum period. There, as in many other States before the Civil War, it was believed that education was a domestic or religious concern rather than a concern for the State, and the principle of public taxation as the chief means of school support developed very slowly.

Texas and Florida were the last of the Southern States to come into the Union. The former seceded from Mexico in 1836, established its independence, and was admitted to the American Union in 1845. Florida was admitted the same year. The ante-bellum educational careers of these States were, therefore, very brief.

The constitution of the Mexican State, known as Coahuila and Texas, provided for the establishment of Mexican schools for the purpose of giving instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic, the catechism, morals, and the constitution, and ordered that a school plan be made for the State. As early as 1828 an American type of school was organized under Spanish supervision, and later the Mexican government made provision for instruction on the Lancasterian plan in several schools. Later still the American residents memorialized the executive and the Legislature for more adequate educational facilities, and in 1833 the Mexican State



granted lands for schools, but the grant accomplished little good. And one of the grievances which Texas mentioned in its declaration of independence was the failure of the Mexican government to provide public schools.

The constitution of the Republic of Texas in 1836 said, "It shall be the duty of Congress, as soon as circumstances will permit, to provide by law a general system of education." By an act of 1839 three leagues of land were granted to each organized county for the purpose of establishing a primary school or academy therein, and fifty leagues for the support of two colleges or universities in the Republic. Slight educational advancement was made under the provisions of this act. In 1840 an act was passed making provision for a board of school commissioners of each county to care for local school interests. They were empowered to organize the counties into districts, to examine and certificate teachers, and to inspect the schools. Teachers of public schools could not legally receive compensation for services unless they held the board's certificate, and all such teachers were required to be competent to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, and geography. Teachers in academies were required to be college or university graduates.

The first constitution of Texas, after it became a member of the Union, contained the following advanced educational provisions:

SECTION 1. A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of this State to make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of public schools.

SECTION 2. The Legislature shall, as early as practicable, establish free schools throughout the State, and shall furnish means for their support by taxation on property; and it shall be the duty of the Legislature to set apart not less than one-tenth of the annual revenue of the State, derivable from taxation, as a perpetual fund, which fund shall be appropriated to the support of free public schools; and no law shall ever be made diverting said fund to any other use; and until such time as the Legislature shall provide for the establishment of such schools in the several districts of the State, the fund thus

created shall remain as a charge against the State, passed to the credit of the free common-school fund.

SECTION 3. All public lands which have been heretofore, or which may hereafter be, granted for public schools to the various counties, or other political divisions in this State, shall not be alienated in fee, nor disposed of otherwise than by lease for a term not exceeding twenty years, in such manner as the Legislature may direct.

SECTION 4. The several counties in this State which have not received their quantum of lands for the purposes of education shall be entitled to the same quantity heretofore appropriated by the Congress of the Republic of Texas to other counties.

For several years after Texas became one of the United States the sparsity of population and the confusion and disorder which grew out of the war with Mexico delayed legislative compliance with the educational provisions of the constitution. By 1854, however, the population of the State had greatly increased and the confused conditions of the times had somewhat disappeared. The State was then ready to turn attention to its educational needs, and in January, 1854, an act was approved establishing a system of public schools. This act provided for setting apart for school purposes the sum of \$200,000 in 5 per cent United States bonds. The annual interest on this fund was to be distributed to the various counties of the State on the basis of free white population between the ages of six and sixteen years.

The chief justice and the commissioners of each county were constituted a board of county school commissioners who were to have the counties of the State formed into districts and to order an election of three trustees for each local school. These trustees were to call elections for the purpose of locating schoolhouses and to attend to the erection of a schoolhouse in each district. Until a good and substantial house with the necessary equipment should be provided no money could be drawn from the county treasury for school purposes in the local district. The trustees were also charged with the duty of engaging teachers, visiting the schools, and exercising general educational superintendence

in their districts. The schools were to be maintained by the funds coming from the State and by subscriptions, and if these sources were not sufficient to pay the salaries agreed upon, the trustees had authority to levy rate bills on the patrons to supply the deficiencies. Under the law the treasurer of the State was ex-officio state superintendent of schools. The state apportionment of school funds was made annually on the basis of statements made by the tax assessors and collectors concerning the number of school children in each district. These and other records were kept by the treasurer of the State, to whom the local trustees were required to report annually. The state treasurer was likewise required to make annual reports to the governor.

This act and a few minor revisions remained until the Civil War the legal basis of the common-school system of Texas. The law did not prevent local trustees from employing teachers of the primary department of any college, academy, or other private school, or from converting such department into a common school for the local district if the patrons so desired and so instructed the trustees. This soon came to be a widely popular practice in the State and led in many instances to the ingrafting of so-called public schools on private or incorporated institutions—a practice which prevailed more or less widely throughout the South during ante-bellum days and, to some extent, later. In 1860 there were 1218 public schools reported in the State, with 1274 teachers and nearly 37,000 pupils, supported at an expenditure of more than \$414,000. The schools could hardly be called free schools, however, since the larger part of their support was from tuition fees, even though after 1846 one tenth of the annual revenues of the State, in addition to the income from the school fund, was said to have been appropriated for school purposes in accordance with constitutional requirement.

Florida was made a territory in 1819, but almost nothing was done for public education until 1831, when the Florida Education Society was formed "to diffuse information on the subject of education and to secure the establishment of a school system for the

territory." In the same year the governor was authorized to appoint three commissioners to examine into the need for schools and to report a plan suited to the needs and resources of the territory. A women's educational organization was formed in the State about the same time, and considerable interest was shown in public schools. In 1832 provision was made for a Fellenberg manual-labor school at Tallahassee, and a so-called "common school" was set up at St. Augustine.

In 1839 educational legislation was enacted which provided for a form of local organization and administration similar to that in use in other States at that time. Provision was made for three township trustees to care for the school lands and to apply the income to school support. This problem was a most difficult one, however, because many townships were practically uninhabited at that time. In 1843 the county sheriffs were made commissioners for the care of school lands, and the funds accruing from these sources were appropriated to the education of poor children. In 1845, the year that Florida entered the Union, the county probate judges were made ex-officio county school superintendents, one of whose duties was to receive educational reports from the local trustees and to forward them to the secretary of State, who embodied them in his report to the Legislature.

The constitution of Florida, under which the territory became a State in 1845, was framed in 1838 and provided for a perpetual fund to be appropriated for the use of public schools. The first school law enacted after the State was admitted to the Union was the act of 1849, which provided for the establishment of a school system. The following year the registrar of public lands was made ex-officio state superintendent of public schools, and county taxation for school support was authorized, but this part of the law seems to have been effective only in Monroe and Franklin Counties. The school fund at this time was by common consent applied almost exclusively to the education of the poor children. In 1852 Tallahassee established a public school which was supported by a public levy in the town, and this school was among



the earliest town schools in the South supported by taxation. About the same time legal provision was made for establishing two seminaries, one in East and one in West Florida, on lands previously granted by Congress for that purpose. According to the law the first purpose of these institutions was "the instruction of persons, both male and female, in the art of teaching all the various branches that pertain to a good common school education," and "instruction in the mechanic arts, in husbandry and agricultural chemistry, in the fundamental laws, and in what regards the rights and duties of citizens." Each county was entitled to send to one of these seminaries as many pupils as it had representatives in the Legislature of the State. One of these schools was set up at Ocala and later moved to Gainesville, and the other was established at Tallahassee; and, with temporary interruptions, they had long and useful careers as educational agencies.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War public sentiment in Florida was rapidly developing in favor of public free schools. Legislation was being revised and improved, the idea of taxation for school support was gaining strength, and improvement was generally appearing. Interest in normal-school work was especially gaining at the close of the ante-bellum period. The chief weaknesses of the school plan, however, were a lack of adequate financial support and the absence of effective state supervision. The total income from the State for educational purposes in 1860 was about \$75,000, and of this amount nearly \$23,000 came from the school-fund income. But the report of the ex-officio superintendent for the closing years of the period under discussion showed that several counties "were taking hold of the public schools and running them for three months" and that such schools cost less and were superior to private schools.

From this general description of educational development in the South before 1860 it may be seen that the response to the ante-bellum educational revival was not so prompt and effective there as in some other parts of the country. But even in that region a new educational consciousness was being awakened. During

the two decades immediately preceding the war the ground was being prepared for a more wholesome conception of education as a function of the State, and the Southern States generally were responding or were preparing to respond to the increased demands for public schools when the conflict of 1861-1865 interrupted the movement.

Long legislative struggles were necessary before adequate and complete laws were secured for the public support and supervision of schools. This was the experience of practically every State, for legislative action followed far behind the advanced recommendations of the advocates of universal and free elementary education. But in the Southern States several factors and influences especially served to retard the force of the revival spirit which was so effectively felt in some other sections. Chief among these factors was the institution of slavery, which tended to pronounce class and social distinctions and to widen the line which separated the independent from the dependent part of the community. Aristocratic notions and conceptions colored political as well as social action. Moreover, class and sectional struggles appeared within several of the Southern States, and these held back the cause of schools. Liberal constitutional provisions for general elementary education appeared before 1860, but the idea early appeared and continued to prevail that free public schools were to be provided by the State primarily, if at all, for the children of the poor and dependent. Those opposing a state-supported and state-controlled school system for all children argued that it would make education too common, serve to change the status of those whose social position was fixed, and break down certain social barriers.

Conflicts with religious and sectarian interests also served for a time to delay the acceptance of the democratic theory of education. Voluntary agencies had long been depended on for elementary education for poor children, and the practice of appropriating public-school funds to private and sometimes to denominational schools rather strengthened opposition to a state school system. The theory that education by the State was an intrusion into the

parental obligation, and, as such, was dangerous and pagan, had force also and persisted for many years. Objection to taxes except for ordinary expenses of government, and a rather widespread belief that those having no children should not be taxed to support schools, likewise retarded public education. Moreover, when beginnings had been made there was a general tendency in all the Southern States to place educational authority in small local units where selfish and provincial interests were strong and where community coöperation was most difficult to secure. Among certain classes of people there was the belief that a state system of schools was visionary and impractical. To combat these and other objections and to overcome the prejudices against public schools required long and patient effort of many agencies before the cause of universal and free education for all could gain strength and popular favor.

It should be kept in mind also that the South was then, as it has always been, essentially rural. It was a region of country people who were sparsely settled. They were slow to respond to new movements and advanced ideas because this sparsity and the poor conditions of means of communication prevented an extension of such movements and ideas to them. Methods of farming were primitive, markets were undeveloped, industrial centers were few, and life in the South was generally lonely and isolated. Community and neighborhood coöperation was practically unknown. The persistence of some of these conditions helps to explain the low educational rank of the South at the present time.<sup>1</sup> Education in representative cities compared favorably with education in cities elsewhere, but outside such centers the problem in the South is to provide for large numbers of children who are scattered over vast areas. This is one reason why the condition of rural education presents the most immediately urgent task confronting the South at this time.

The factors and influences which tended to promote public schools were not so numerous or unusual in the South before

<sup>1</sup> See Ayres, *An Index Number for State School Systems*. New York, 1920.

1860, but considerable force had been gained for the cause by that date. The increase in population and the lack of a corresponding increase in adequate facilities for schools drew attention to the new educational needs. Open letters and addresses on the subject were published in the press, education societies were formed and had a wide range of activities (especially during the closing years of the ante-bellum period), and elaborate legislative reports and studies were made for purposes of propaganda. As noted at the beginning of this chapter the extension of the franchise made the need for more schools appear rather acute. From the thirties to the late fifties the recommendations of the governors and the reports of state school officers likewise effected a change in public attitude and often influenced legislative action. The cheapness of the Lancasterian system of monitorial instruction, which was adopted in many towns and cities in the South, assisted in developing sentiment for public schools, though its influence was not so great in that region as in those sections which had larger centers. This method of instruction helped to prepare the way for state taxation. The Sunday school, which was organized primarily not to give religious instruction but to teach poor children to read and to write, also proved an aid in promoting the public-school idea. Virginia, which was a pioneer in this movement, and other Southern States responded very promptly and effectively to this educational interest, which drew the attention of the more prosperous and better-educated class of the community to the educational needs of the less prosperous and the ignorant.

These and other forces and agencies were at work at one time or another in the South before the Civil War. Most of the States in that region passed rather slowly through the process of democratizing education, and the principle of public education, as it is understood today, was not early and fully accepted by any of them. But that principle had not gained complete and practical acceptance anywhere in the United States before the Civil War. Yet even in the Southern States, where the contests for free schools were very fierce, considerable progress was made for public



elementary education. And on the eve of that great conflict those States were generally preparing to accept the democratic idea of schools supported and controlled by the State. But for the Civil War and its dreadful aftermath the history of public education in the South would be a different and a better story.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. List the obstacles to public educational development in the South or in a given Southern State before 1860 under (a) social, (b) economic, (c) political, (d) religious.

2. List the factors or agencies which tended to promote public schools in the South or in a given Southern State before the Civil War.

3. Make a study of the legislative conflict over the subject of public support and control of schools in your State between 1830 and 1860. What were the defects of the method or methods of school support in your State before 1860?

4. List the arguments for and those against public schools in your State before 1860 and compare or contrast them with arguments made for and against the proposed extension of public education today.

5. Study the principal features of the Lancasterian system of schools and account for its popularity in cities where it was adopted. How widely was the system adopted in your State?

6. Trace the development of the Sunday-school movement in your State and point out its value to public education.

7. Account for the element of charity which was present in practically all public-school plans established in the South before 1860. Account for the persistence of the "pauper school" idea in public education.

8. Study the relation of density of population to public educational development. In what way does the growth of cities affect public education?

9. Show the actual influence on public educational sentiment of the extension of suffrage and the increase in elective offices.

10. List the principal factors on which rural-school improvement depends in your State. Why is rural education such an immediately urgent and difficult problem in the South today?

11. Trace the development of taxation for schools in your State.

12. What part of the school population was enrolled in schools in your State before 1860? What part is enrolled today?

13. Make a study of educational journals and of teachers' associations in your State prior to the Civil War.

14. Explain the popularity of the district system of schools. Point out the advantages and the disadvantages of the system in the South before 1860. What are its advantages and disadvantages today?

15. Trace the development of the chief county school officer (superintendent) in your State; of the chief state school officer. Compare the duties of each of these officers today with the duties of corresponding officers in the South before 1860.

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## CHAPTER VIII

### SCHOOL PRACTICES BEFORE 1860

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. From the available materials of the period a fairly adequate account may be had of school practices in the South before 1860.

2. The curriculum was narrow, the three R's occupying the first places of importance. In these subjects a great variety of books were used, and uniformity of texts was practically unknown. The "Old Blue Back Speller," the "New England Primer," and the "New York Reader" were very popular.

3. Arithmetic occupied an important place, and texts by Colburn, Pike, and Jess were most widely used.

4. Geography was slow to find a distinct place in the curriculum, but texts on the subject were often used as readers, histories, and moral guides. Numerous texts were used, but those of Morse, Olney, and Peter Parley (Goodrich) were most frequently found.

5. History and grammar were tardily recognized for proper places in the school. Texts on history were used primarily as reading materials. Texts on grammar were regarded as intricate and dry, and the purpose and methods of teaching this subject differed greatly from present-day practices.

6. Toward the close of the ante-bellum period, and especially during the war, the Southern States became interested in publishing their own textbooks, because of the sectionalism of that period.

7. Incompetent teachers, wasteful methods, harsh discipline, uncomfortable buildings, and meager equipment were among the defects of the schools. Many of the practices of the time are described by contemporary accounts.

8. After 1860, improvements appeared in educational practices, but only after many years of toil and determination to restore resources and the confidence of the people.

The practical operation of any educational system is more difficult to describe than the theory and laws on which the system

is built, and the more remote the period the more difficult is an adequate and safe description of its practices. A scarcity of concrete illustrative materials of no more remote days than the ante-bellum period makes it difficult to give a fair description of actual practices of that time. The poor system of bookkeeping then in use makes it practically impossible to give an intelligible account of the fiscal features of the ante-bellum schools; and local school officials, either ignorantly or negligently, often failed to record in permanent form details which, apparently unimportant then, now appear important and of great value historically and for purposes of comparison. Moreover, at that time the reports of state educational officers were irregular and indefinite, and those which are accessible are frequently unreliable and therefore unsatisfactory sources of information. However, a careful study of the few illustrative materials available affords the basis of a suggestive and a more or less adequate account of educational practices in the South before 1860. In such an account the curriculum, or course of study, schoolbooks, material equipment, teachers and methods of teaching, and school customs are among the more interesting features. The principles and practices of actual school support in the various Southern States during the period under consideration were noted in the preceding chapter.

The curriculum of the common school of the Southern States during the ante-bellum period was very narrow, consisting of the minimum essentials of an English education—reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling. These monopolized the course of study for many years and were the subjects on which teachers were usually examined, when they were examined at all. Calvin H. Wiley, North Carolina's ante-bellum superintendent of public instruction, in the fifties urged that the female teachers of that State be examined on these subjects and that the male teachers be required, in addition, to show a knowledge of and ability to teach grammar and geography. This requirement was not general, however, in the South. Geography, history, and grammar



were looked upon as advanced subjects and found places in the curriculum very tardily, and texts in geography and history, when used at all, served as reading books rather than as guides for geographical and historical study.

Uniformity of texts was practically unknown; and one of the evils which naturally resulted was "the multiplicity and frequent change" of books which accumulated expenses on the parents and guardians and retarded the progress of the school work. Teachers were often embarrassed by having large schools with nearly every child in a separate class. Those who had an interest in educational advancement occasionally urged the adoption of uniform texts in an effort to drive out poor books, to prevent frequent and unwise changes, and to aid in developing a form of student classification and grading which would not otherwise have been possible at that time.

Although so-called uniform texts were not adopted in any Southern State before the war, an occasional "list" was suggested or recommended. At a convention of school officials and teachers in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1853, the following books were recommended for use in the common schools of that State: Webster's Speller, McGuffey's or Mandeville's Readers, Brown's or Bailey's English Grammar, Mitchell's or Smith's Geography, and Colburn's or Davies's Arithmetics. In the report of Superintendent Wiley in the same year the following books were recommended for the schools of North Carolina: Webster's Speller, Wiley's "North Carolina Reader," Parker's First and Second Readers, Davies's Arithmetics, Emerson's Arithmetic, Mitchell's "Intermediate Geography" (North Carolina Edition), Bullion's Grammar, and Worcester's Comprehensive Dictionary.

Perhaps the nearest approach to a semiuniformity of texts for use in the public schools was made in Arkansas, where, under an act of 1843, provision was made for purchasing books for distribution in the counties in proportion to the scholastic population. From the report of the auditor it appears that the "United States Primer," Webster's "Spelling Book," Goodrich's Readers,

Willard's "History of the United States," Morse's Geography, Davies's Arithmetics, Gallaudet's Dictionary, and Bullion's "English Grammar" were used in that State. The books were not distributed free of charge, however, nor does it appear that the method of distribution, through the auditor's office, was a success. In 1855 Superintendent Perry, of Alabama, recommended a long list of books for the children of that State and professional books for the teachers. The books for the children were similar to those used elsewhere; those recommended for the teachers were Potter and Emerson's "The School and the Schoolmaster," Page's "Theory and Practice of Teaching," Abbott's "The Teacher," Alcott's "Slate and Blackboard Exercises," Mayhew's "Popular Education," Mansfield's "American Education," and Barnard's "School Architecture." From the beginning of the primary-school system in Virginia books and writing materials were furnished free to all children whose parents were unable to bear such an expense, and this practice prevailed also in other Southern States.

The list mentioned above by no means included all the texts which were actually in use in the South before 1860. In addition to Webster's famous book, which was most extensively used not only in the Southern States but in all sections of the country before the war, the following spellers were also widely used: Barry's Speller, Burton's Speller, Cobb's Speller, Comly's Speller, Dilworth's Speller, Emerson's Speller, "The Eclectic Speller," Ely's Speller, Fenning's Speller, Hazen's Speller and Definer, Kirby's Speller, Marshall's Speller, Mayo's Speller, Murray's Speller, "The National Spelling Book," "The United States Speller," "The Universal Speller," "The Union Spelling Book," Town's "Spelling Book," "The Western Speller," and Wood's Speller.

Spelling books during the ante-bellum period were not intended or used primarily for the purpose of teaching spelling, but served the threefold purpose of readers, moral instructors, and guides. The most famous of all the texts on the subject was Webster's, popularly known as the "Old Blue Back," which was in wide use in the schools of this country until comparatively

recent years. Even young people of today are familiar with or have heard of this celebrated book. It was planned after Dilworth's Speller (a well-known English spelling book) and was originally bound on the back with leather and on the sides with thin pieces of oak which were covered with a blue paper, from which it got its persisting name. For two decades after its appearance the book bore the high-sounding title of "The First Part of a Grammatical Institute of the English Language." Later the name was changed to the "American Spelling-Book," and later still to "The Elementary Spelling-Book." Each printer who published the book varied minor parts of his issue according to his own fancy: one issue carried a portrait of "The Father of his Country," and another bore a woodcut of the author which "made him look like a porcupine." When the first edition was in preparation Webster had to give bond to guarantee the printers against any possible losses. But in 1817 one publisher gave the author "three thousand dollars a year for his term of copyright, and another gave forty thousand for the privilege of publishing editions for fourteen years." At the time of the author's death, in 1842, a million copies of the book were being distributed annually.

The influence of this book can hardly be estimated. Spelling became a fad almost simultaneously with its appearance, and "spelling bees" soon came to be a very popular school exercise. In the South, where schoolbooks were scarce, the "Old Blue Back" was often the first book put into the hands of the child when he entered school and often was the only book many children ever studied. It served as primer, speller, reader, and moral guide. The reading lessons in the book were intended "to combine, with the familiarity of objects, useful truth, and practical principles." A moral catechism on humility, revenge, industry, sobriety, pride, honesty, and other subjects, and short stories (each with a moral appended) were other features of the book.<sup>1</sup>

Comly's "A New Spelling-book," published at Philadelphia in 1806, in its use in the South was second to the "Old Blue Back."

<sup>1</sup> Johnson, *Old-time Schools and School-books*.

Comly's spelling book, also was intended to serve as both a reader and speller. The reading matter was of a more or less serious nature, which was true of nearly all schoolbooks of the period. One of the first thoughts which the youth met in Comly's book was, "All of us, my son, are to die." Another speller which found extensive use in the South before the war was Hazen's "Symbolical Speller and Definer," which appeared in 1829. The principle on which this book was prepared was *Verba explicantur symbolis*, and the work was obviously intended to supplant certain old-fashioned spellers in which difficult words occurred "before the pupils could acquire sufficient knowledge of letters to read them with facility." The principle of pictorial representation was also used in the book, and connected with each picture were several words which rimed with the name of the object represented. Certain advantages were claimed for this arrangement, since "in learning to spell, the sounds of the letters and the forms of the words are the chief objects of recollection."

Among the primers which were most widely used in the South before the war were the following: "The American Primer," "The Baltimore Primer," Cobb's Primer, Hanson's "Symbolical Primer," "The Juvenile Primer," "The New York Primer," "The New England Primer," "The Philadelphia Primer," "The Union Primer," "The United States Primer," "The Washington Primer," Webster's Primer, and Worcester's Primer. Of these "The New England Primer" was for many generations the most popular. It found extensive use in the primary schools throughout all sections of the country and was in use in several of the Southern States after it had fallen into neglect in other sections. This book was probably in use in New England as early as 1690. It went through many editions and served also as a type for a variety of other similar primers. Some of these varied the illustrations, the quotations, and the moral tales in which the original abounded, though now and then direct copying from it appeared in the less celebrated ones. For example, "The American Primer," which was published in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1803, and which



became more or less popular in the South, followed "The New England Primer" very closely in several places.

"The New England Primer" began with the alphabet, which was followed by easy syllables and then by syllables and words of increasing difficulty. The remainder of the book was largely "a religious and moral miscellany of verse and prose" collected from a great variety of sources. Prominent in this miscellany was a "picture alphabet—a series of twenty-four tiny pictures, each accompanied by a two-line or three-line jingle." This riming method of teaching was very old, perhaps much older than "The New England Primer." The book went through many editions, which were varied from time to time, and had a long and wide use. The towns discarded it first, but it continued to be used in the country districts late into the nineteenth century. It was reported in use in several counties in Virginia in the forties, and other States were also using it then and later. The total sales of this little book were estimated at three million copies. "The American Primer," a little book of seventy-five pages, was also extensively used in the South before the war. The reading lessons which it contained consisted of short stories which illustrated obedience, goodness, love, mercy, forgiveness, and fondness for school, for books, for parents and playmates. It also contained religious verse and numerous moral tales.

The list of reading books in use in the South before 1860 was even larger than the number of primers. Reading, together with writing and ciphering, occupied the major portion of the curriculum during that time, and almost any printed matter which could be furnished the children served as a textbook on the subject. Some of the materials reported as readers were Bingham's "American Preceptor," Blair's "Reading Exercises," Baxter's "Call," the Bible and Sabbath-school books, Cabinet Library, Class Readers, Child's Library, "Child's Books," "Child at Home," Cobb's "Reading Books," "Columbian Orator," "Come and Welcome to Christ," Edgeworth's "Early Lessons," "Eclectic Reader," Emerson's Readers, "Evening Entertainment," "Fascinating

Companion," "Family Story Book," Hall's "Western Reader," Hervey's "Meditations," "Juvenile Readers," Kay's Reader, McGuffey's Readers, Mandeville's Readers, "Moral Instructor," "Mother at Home," Murray's "English Reader, Introduction and Sequel," "National Reader," "New England Reader," "The New York Readers" (Nos. 1, 2, and 3), "New York Expositor," New Testament, "Orator's Assistant," "Panorama of Arts," "Parent's Cabinet," Parley's "Tales," Parley's Reader, "Popular Lessons," "Pleasing Companion," "Pilgrim's Progress," "Robinson Crusoe," Scott's "Lessons," "Southern Reader," *The Spectator*, Town's "Little Thinker," United States Constitution, "United States Readers," "The Virginian Orator," and many others. Of these Murray's Reader (published at Haverhill, Massachusetts in 1825), "The New York Reader," No. 3 (published in New York in 1828), and the McGuffey series of readers were the most widely used.

The ambition of all so-called "readers" of the period was to assist young people to read with propriety and effect, to improve their language and their sentiments, "and to inculcate some of the most important principles of piety and virtue." Purity, propriety, and elegance of diction frequently characterized many of the selections chosen for some of the readers in use. The contents usually included narrative selections, didactic pieces, argumentative selections, descriptive selections, pathetic pieces, dialogues, and public speeches. "The New York Reader," No. 3, contained selections from the Proverbs, the Psalms, Hume "On History," select sentences concerning "God and his attributes," the story of Cain and Abel, the story of Job, and Pope's "Universal Prayer." Some of the readers contained instructions on the principles of good reading, treating the "proper loudness of the voice," distinctiveness, due degree of slowness, pronunciation, emphasis, tones, pauses, and the proper manner of reading verse.

Because of the high esteem in which mathematics was held as a practical science, arithmetic occupied a very important place in the curriculum and, as in other subjects, a great variety of texts

were in use. Among those most frequently reported were texts by the following authors: Adams, Beattie, Colburn, Daboll, Davies, Dilworth, Emerson, Fenn, Fenning, Fisher, Fowler, Gough, Jess, Jones, Niles, Park, Pike, Ray, Root, Slocumb, Smiley, Smith, Stockton, Tower, Walkingham, Walsh, Webster, and Willard. Of these books Colburn's "First Lesson in Intellectual Arithmetic" (which appeared in 1821), Thomas Dilworth's "The Schoolmaster's Assistant" (which appeared earlier), and the work of Pike and of Jess (earlier still) were most extensively used in the South during the ante-bellum period.

Colburn's "First Lessons in Intellectual Arithmetic" possessed a merit not always found in many texts of the time. The book was the result of practical work which the author had done as a teacher of mathematics, and had been tested in actual use before publication. Barnard's *American Journal of Education* said in 1856 that the book "enjoyed a more enviable success than any other schoolbook ever published. . . . It has been said to be 'the only faultless schoolbook that we have.' It has certainly wrought a great change in the manner of teaching arithmetic." Dilworth's "The Schoolmaster's Assistant" appeared much earlier than Colburn's arithmetic and went hurriedly through many editions. Two other arithmetics, however, were even more popular than Colburn's and Dilworth's. These were "A New and Complete System of Arithmetic," by Nicholas Pike, and "The American Tutor's Assistant," by Zachariah Jess.

The work of Pike, first published in 1788, was the first book of "its kind composed in America." It was very comprehensive and exhaustive, became popular immediately, and went through many editions. It was very widely used in the South. In 1840 the book was reported in use in half the counties of Virginia, and about the same time a book store in Raleigh advertised that one hundred copies had just been received for sale.

The comprehensive character of the book may be seen from the following partial list of subjects which were treated in it, in addition to the usual arithmetic processes: extraction of the biquadrate

root; pensions in arrears at simple interest; barter, alligation medial; pendulums; a perpetual almanac; the time of the moon's southing; how to find the year of indiction; how to find the value of gold in the currency of New England and of Virginia; a table of values of the sundry pieces in the several States; comparisons of the American foot with the foot of other countries; table of the dominical letters according to the cycle of the sun; to find the dominical letter according to the Julian and Gregorian methods; a table by which Easter could be calculated from the year 1753 to 4199; plane geometry; "plane rectangular trigonometry"; "oblique angular trigonometry"; algebra; conic sections; and, finally, "the proportions and tonnage of Noah's ark." Some of the exercises of the student were of riddlelike character:

How many barley-corns will reach from Newburyport to Boston, it being forty-three miles?

How many days since the commencement of the Christian era?

How many minutes since the commencement of the American War, which happened on April 19, 1775?

How many seconds since the commencement of the war, April 19, 1775, and the independence of the United States of America, which took place July 4, 1776?

A bullet is dropped from the top of a building, and is found to reach the ground in  $1\frac{3}{4}$  seconds; required its height.

In what time will a musket-ball, dropped from the top of a steeple 484 feet high, come to the ground?

Nine gentlemen sat at an inn, and were so pleased with their host, and with each other, that, in a frolic, they agreed to tarry as long as they, together with their host, could sit every day in a different position; pray how long, had they kept their agreement, would their frolic have lasted? Answer  $9941\frac{885}{885}$  days.

A gentleman making his addresses in a lady's family, who had five daughters: She told him that their father had made a will, which imported that the first four of the girls' fortunes were together to make £50,000, the last four £66,000, the three last with the first £60,000, the three first with the last £56,000, and the two first with two last, £64,000, which, if he would unravel, and make it appear what each was to have, as he appeared to have a partiality for



Harriet, her third daughter, he should be welcome to her : pray, what was Miss Harriet's fortune? Answer, £10,000.

An ignorant fop wanted to purchase an elegant house ; a facetious gentleman told him he had one which he would sell him on these moderate terms, viz. that he should give him a penny for the first door, 2d for the second, 4d for the third, and so on, doubling at every door, which were 36 in all : It is a bargain, cried the simpleton, and here is a guinea to bind it ; pray what would the house have cost him ? Answer, £286,331,153, 1s, 3d.

Jess's work, which first appeared in 1798, was also popular in the Southern States, was widely circulated there and had a long career. Among the subjects found in the work were numeration, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of integers ; compound addition ; compound addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of Federal money ; single rule of three and double rule of three ; simple interest and compound interest ; practice ; decimal fractions ; tare and tret, equation, barter, loss and gain, and fellowship exchange ; vulgar fractions ; single and double rule of three in vulgar fractions ; square root ; cube root ; discount ; annuities, and annuities in reversion ; perpetuities, and perpetuities in reversion ; and, finally, there was a collection of "promiscuous questions." Some of the problems set for the pupils were as follows :

A Virginia merchant sent goods to Norway worth 2743 dol. 80 cts. currency ; how many rix dollars, at 80 cts. each, must he receive ?

A merchant of North Carolina shipped a quantity of flour, which when disposed of, amounted to 1186 millreas, 500 reas ; and received in return 17 pipes of wine ; what was it per pipe, a millrea reckoned at 1 dol. ?

When first the marriage knot was ty'd  
Between my wife and me ;  
My age was to that of my bride,  
As three times three to three ;  
But now when ten and half ten years,  
We man and wife have been,  
Her age to mine exactly bears  
As eight is to sixteen ;



Smiley, Smith, Willett, Willard, and Woodbridge. Of these the works of Morse, Olney, and "Peter Parley" seem to have been most popular in the South.

The pioneer American geography was the work of Jedidiah Morse, who published his first book on the subject in 1784, at the age of twenty-three. "The American Universal Geography," which was "a view of the present state of all the empires, kingdoms, states, and republics in the known world, and of the United States in particular," appeared in 1793 and had an extensive circulation.

In the preface of this book Morse stated that Guthrie's "Geographical Grammar" stood highest in the estimation of the public of any work on geography and that it had had a very extensive sale in America. With all its merits, however, he thought that work had two capital faults: it was deficient and false in its descriptions of the United States and gave an unwieldy and disproportionate account to Great Britain. Moreover, Morse thought the propriety of importing any schoolbooks from England very questionable, as the American people ran the hazard of having children imbibe from such books the monarchial ideas and the national prejudices of the English. The purpose of his book may be seen in the following, which appeared in the introduction:

No national government holds out to its subjects so many alluring motives to obtain an accurate knowledge of their own country, and of its various interests, as that of United States. By the freedom of our elections, public honors and public offices are not confined to any one class of men, but are offered to merit, in whatever rank it may be found. To discharge the duties of public office with honor and applause, the history, policy, commerce, productions, particular advantages and interests of the several States, ought to be thoroughly understood. It is obviously wise and prudent then to initiate our youth in the knowledge of these things, and thus to form their minds upon republican principles, and prepare them for further usefulness and honor. There is no science better adapted to the capacities of youth, and more apt to captivate their attention than geography. An acquaintance with this science, more than with any other, satisfies that pertinent

curiosity which is the predominating feature of the youthful mind. It is to be lamented that this part of education has been so long neglected in America. Our young men universally, have been much better acquainted with the geography of Europe and Asia than with that of our own States and country. The want of suitable books on this subject has been the cause, . . . of the shameful defect in our education. Till within a few years, we have seldom pretended to write, and hardly to think for ourselves. We have humbly received from Great Britain our laws, our manners, our books, and our modes of thinking, and our youth have been educated rather as the subjects of a British king, than as citizens of a free and independent republic. But the scene is now changed. The revolution has been favorable to science in general; particularly to that of the geography of our own country. In the following sheets the author has endeavored to bring this valuable branch of knowledge home to the common schools, and to the cottage firesides. . . . He has endeavored to accommodate it to the use of the schools, as a reading book, that our youth of both sexes, at the same time that they are learning to read, might imbibe an acquaintance with their country, and an attachment to its interests; and, in that forming period of their lives, begin to qualify themselves to act their several parts in life, with reputation to themselves, and with usefulness to their country.

The book contained treatments of astronomical geography, of the several astronomical systems of the world, of the planets, of the solar system, of the comets, of the fixed stars, of the earth, of the doctrine of the sphere, of the natural divisions of the earth, of North America, Danish America, the United States of America, South America, West India Islands, of Europe, of Asia, of Africa, and of "new discoveries." Each State or general division of the United States was discussed separately, in a manner not altogether unlike that of modern geographies, special attention being given, however, to such subjects as religion, military strength, manners and social customs, literature, educational facilities, curiosities, constitution, history, and several other topics. The following excerpts, descriptive of certain Southern States, illustrate one interesting feature of the book:



The North Carolinians are mostly planters, and live from half a mile to 3 and 4 miles from each other, on their plantations. They have a plentiful country—no ready market for their produce—little intercourse with strangers, and a natural fondness for society, which induce them to be hospitable to travellers. They appear to have little taste for the sciences.

In the flat country near the sea coast of North Carolina, the inhabitants during the summer and autumn, are subject to intermittent fevers, which often prove fatal. The countenances of the inhabitants during these seasons, have generally a pale yellowish cast, occasioned by the prevalence of bilious symptoms.

The general topic of conversation among the men, when cards, the bottle, and occurrences of the day do not intervene, are negroes, the price of indigo, rice, tobacco, etc. . . . Political inquiries, and philosophical disquisitions are attended to but by a few men of genius and industry, and are too laborious for the minds of the people at large. . . . Temperance and industry are not to be reckoned among the virtues of the North Carolinians. The time which they waste in drinking, idling and gambling, leaves them very little opportunity to improve their plantations or their minds. The improvement of the former is left to their overseers and negroes; the improvement of the latter is too often neglected. . . .

We are told that a strange and very barbarous practice prevailed among the lower class of people before the Revolution in the back parts of Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia; it was called gouging, and was neither more nor less than a man, when boxing, putting out the eye of his antagonist with his thumb. How quick, under a mild government, is the reformation of manners! We have lately been told that in a particular county, where, at the quarterly court twenty years ago, a day seldom passed without ten or fifteen boxing matches, it is now a rare thing to hear of a fight.

There is no peculiarity in the manners of the inhabitants of this State [South Carolina] except that arises from the mischievous influence of slavery; and in this, indeed, they do not differ from the inhabitants of other Southern States. . . . The Carolinians sooner arrive at maturity, both in their bodies and minds, than the natives of cold climates. They possess a natural quickness and vivacity of genius, superior to the inhabitants of the North; but too generally want that enterprise and perseverance which are necessary for the highest attainments in the arts and sciences. . . . There are not a

few instances, however, in this State, in which genius has been united with application, and the effects of their union have been happily experienced, not only by this State, but by the United States. . . . Many of the inhabitants spare no pains nor expense in giving the highest polish of education to their children, by enabling them to travel, and by other means attainable to those who have but moderate fortunes.

The book also treated the educational and literary conditions in the various States, though not always accurately. One of the most interesting treatments of this subject was the account of the educational legislation which Jefferson proposed for Virginia in 1779, concerning which Morse said :

The excellent measures for the diffusion of useful knowledge, which the forementioned bill proposes, have not yet been carried into effect. And it will be happy if the great inequality in the circumstances of the citizens—the pride, the independence, and the indolence of one class and the poverty and depression of the other—do not prove insuperable difficulties in the way of their universal operations.

The geography of Jesse Olney was also widely used in the South prior to the war. In 1828 he published his "Geography and Atlas," which passed through numerous editions, some of which numbered eighty thousand copies. This book and others by the same author were at once accepted as standard works on the subject and found a place in all the schools of the country. For forty years or more they had a large place in the schools of the South. Moreover, they helped greatly in changing the purpose and methods of teaching geography. Olney, who was a practical teacher, expressed disapproval of many of the geographies then in use, which "began with an exposition of the science of astronomy, and, making the center of the solar system the initial point, developed the scheme until it finally reached the earth." Largely through the influence of Olney's books this method was reversed. He insisted on beginning in the community in which the pupils lived and on making "clear by lucid

definitions the natural divisions of land and water, illustrating each instance by the use of maps." He sought to make the surface of the earth familiar to the child by using as much concrete and illustrative material as possible. Theoretic geography soon gave place to the modern descriptive science. Olney was, therefore, one of the first teachers in this country to adopt the Pestalozzian principles in the teaching of the subject and to initiate the idea of "home" geography.

In the introduction to his "Practical System of Modern Geography" the author held that children can learn geography at a very early age. But most of the books of the time, he states, began with definitions, which, to be understood, required a degree of knowledge on the subject never possessed by the beginner. Children should not be made to commit definitions to memory, but should be taught "by the eye," through the use of maps, pictures, and diagrams. "The map is to geography what orthography is to reading," and the child must not only understand its use but must have an intimate knowledge of its parts before he can acquire the proper understanding of the subject. The map should, therefore, be the first lesson in geography. Moreover, the author said that instead of introducing the beginner at once to astronomical geography he should begin "with the town in which he lives"; this was the natural as well as the "philosophical method" of teaching the subject. On all subjects "the learner must make himself master of simple things before he can understand complex ones."

"Peter Parley's" "Method of Telling about Geography to Children," which was written almost entirely in simple, colloquial style, was also popular in the Southern States. In this book geographical rimes were used. Another interesting feature of the book was the obvious and often labored attempts to teach lessons of morality and religion. In the chapter on Asia the following account of the flood appeared:

The flood, or deluge, took place about 1650 after the world was created; that is more than 4000 years ago. The history of the Jews,

which is related in the Old Testament, is continued from the time of Noah to the birth of our Saviour, which was 1829 years ago. The history is exceedingly interesting, and is perfectly true. The early history of almost all other nations is a great part of it false; but the Bible tells us nothing but what is worthy of belief. . . . The general lesson to be learnt from the Old Testament is this: that God has established a strict connexion, in this world, between obedience to him and happiness; and between disobedience and unhappiness. If you will carefully read the Old Testament you will find that while an individual, or a people, or a nation obeyed and served God, they were happy. When they departed from his laws and became wicked and disobedient, then they became miserable. The same thing is true now. Wicked nations and wicked peoples soon become unhappy while the good and virtuous generally live in peace. Such, the Bible teaches us, was the course of things in the early ages of the world; such it is now; and such, doubtless, it will ever be.

The next chapter told of the birth of Christ, who came "to dissipate this darkness which had gathered over the minds of men. . . . Let us never, never, forget to hold in deep reverence the name of the one who has been such a benefactor to the world. . . . Let us not only hold his mind in reverence, but let us cherish his doctrines in our hearts, and let us, as far as we may, copy his life and follow his example." In the concluding chapter the final sentences are: "Let us fear to do wrong, because God can punish us. Let us love to do right, because God will reward us."

History also found a very late place in the elementary school, largely because the higher institutions were tardy in recognizing its value in the course of study. Before 1850 the larger colleges of the country provided for instruction in history in connection with other subjects, usually philosophy and English, and when the subject first appeared in the lower schools it was used largely as reading material. Its value as a means of furnishing a broad interpretation of the world was not recognized, nor was it believed that history was capable of making direct appeal to human interests, to curiosity, to the imagination, or capable of developing enlightened patriotism or of strengthening



intellectual habits. Many of the early texts contained neither maps nor illustrations. The function of early history-teaching was conceived as ethical and religious, though the methods used were often unsound for these purposes.

The books on historical subjects most frequently reported in use in the schools of the South before the war were the works of Adams, Frost, Goldsmith, Goodrich ("Peter Parley"), Grimshaw, Guernsey, Hale, Jesse, Millot, Pitkin, Pinnock, Webster, Willard, and Worcester. Ancient, medieval, European, universal, general, and ecclesiastical were adjectives which usually described the texts in use. Most of these books were often the merest outlines, and this outline plan characterized many of the texts on the subject until near the close of the nineteenth century. Moreover, teachers were poorly prepared to teach history, and there was but little to recommend a place for it in the schools. Today a thoroughly prepared teacher is regarded as the first condition to adequate history-teaching; and his qualifications include almost encyclopedic information, more or less practice in the use of historical evidence, the historical attitude, or fair-mindedness in handling historical material, and skill in narration and in properly marshaling historical facts. But poor texts, poorly trained teachers, and classrooms so inadequately equipped as never to suggest the subject were not likely to lead pupils to study history or to acquire the wholesome habit of reading historical material. And all these conditions prevailed in the ante-bellum days and even later.

As late as 1821 the preface to one of the earliest books on history stated that "while our schools abound with a variety of reading-books for children and youth, there has never yet appeared a compendious history of the United States fitted for our common schools." The following year Goodrich's "History of the United States" appeared, and while this text was popular and widely circulated, it too was deficient in illustrative material and continued so until 1832, although numerous editions of the work appeared in the meantime. In that year an improvement was

made in the book. In the same year Noah Webster published a "History of the United States," in which he discussed, among other things, "our English ancestry from the dispersion at Babel, to their migration to America." The work did not go beyond the adoption of the Federal Constitution because "an impartial history cannot be published during the lives of the principal persons concerned in the transactions related, without being exposed to the charge of undue flattery or censure; and unless history is impartial, it misleads the student, and frustrates its proper object." A chapter on "Advice to the Young," intended to "serve, in a degree, to restrain some of the common vices of our country," showed that one important function of history, as of other subjects, was moral and religious.

Grammar was not required in the ante-bellum schools of the South, the teachers were not examined on it, and the subject was therefore not widely taught. Textbooks on grammar did not, like geographies and histories, serve well as readers, and for this reason the subject was somewhat late in finding a place in the curriculum. The early texts were unduly intricate and difficult to explain or to understand, and the subject was regarded as meaningless and dreary. The prefaces of many of the early works were often apologetic and deplored the general lack of interest in it. Occasionally, however, county officials reported a few "grammar and geography pupils" in some of their schools, but for the few who were studying the subject numerous texts were reported. Among these were works by Ashe, Bingham, Boardman, Brown, Bullion, Comly, Frost, Greenleaf, Harrison, Hurd, Ingersol, Jandon, Johnston, Kirkman, Lowth, Murray, Merton, Olney, Sanford, Scott, Smith, Tower, and Webster. The works of Murray and of Kirkman seem to have been the most generally used in the South, though grammars by Bingham and Webster were also widely used for a time.

Lindley Murray, who is known as "the father of English grammar," published his first book on grammar in 1795 while he was in England, where he had gone from New York in search of health.

The book became popular immediately not only in England but in America, where it was so extensively circulated that Murray's name soon came to be a household word. Although it was a work of considerable merit for the time the book was severely criticized "for its obscurity, blunders, and deficient presentation of etymology." One of Murray's friends said to him, "Of all the contrivances invented for puzzling the brain of the young, your grammar is the worst." It was not long, however, before Murray's "Grammar," "Exercises," and "Key" came to be regarded as standard texts, and they maintained that position for many years. Half the counties of Virginia in 1840 reported Murray's work in use, and about the same time a bookstore in Raleigh advertised seven hundred copies of "Murray's English Grammar, well bound in leather and offered at a very reduced price." The book went through fifty editions, and an abridgment of the original work had more than one hundred and twenty editions of ten thousand copies each. The primary purpose of this work was to teach the correct use of spoken and written language and to assist the more advanced pupils "to write with perspicuity and accuracy," but an obvious design of the book, as of many grammars of the period, was to furnish moral instruction, which was sought through the examples and exercises in the illustration of principles and rules.

Kirkman's "English Grammar," followed Murray's very closely in plan, but avoided some of the errors which the latter work contained. Kirkman's illustrations were apt and valuable in that they lent themselves to clearness and comprehension of the principles illustrated. The book sought to be "of practical utility in facilitating" the mental progress of youth, but it presented no attractive graces of style to charm, no "daring flights" to astonish, and no deep researches to gratify the literary connoisseur. It undertook, on the other hand, to make interesting and delightful a study which was regarded as tedious, dry, and irksome. In "Hints to teachers and private learners" the author said that he hoped to help abolish the absurd practice of causing learners to commit and recite definitions and rules "without any simultaneous

application of them to practical examples." The final instructions to the young learner were: "Become learned and virtuous, and you will be great. Love God and serve him, and you will be happy."

In the main the book sought to teach the pupils what they should not say rather than what they should say in speaking and writing. In one column appeared "improper" and in another the "correct" words, thus:

aint	are not
haint	have not
taint	'tis not
baint	are not
maint	may not
waunt	was not
woodent	would not
mussent	must not
izzent	is not
wozzent	was not
hezzent	has not
doozzent	does not
tizzent	'tis not
whool	who will

Among the numerous provincialisms and vulgarisms which Kirkman said were common in the spoken language in New England and New York were the following:

I be goin. He lives to hum.	I am going. He lives at home.
Hese been to hum this two weeks.	He has been at home these two weeks.
You haddent ought to do it.	You ought not to do it.
Yes I had ought.	Certainly I ought.
Taint no better than hizzen.	'Tis no better than his.
Izzent that are line writ well?	Is not that line well written?

The following errors were reported as common in Pennsylvania:



I seen him. Have you saw him? Yest, I have saw him wunst; and that was before you seed him. I done my task. Have you did yours? No, but I be to do it. I be to be there. He know'd me. Leave me be, for Ime afear'd. I wish I haddent did it; howsumever, I don't keer; they cant skeer me. Give me them there books. He ort to go; so he ort. I diddent go to do it. Don't scrouge me. I know'd what he meant, but I never let on.

The following expressions were mentioned, with their corrections, as belonging to Maryland, Virginia, Kentucky, and Mississippi:

Tote the wood to the river. Have you focht the water? Carry the horse to water. He has run against a snag. Is that your plunder, stranger? I war thar, and I seen his boat was loaded too heavy. Whar you gwine? Hese in cahoot with me. Did you get shet of your tobacco? Who hoped you sell it?

In concluding this brief account of textbooks it should be noted that near the close of the ante-bellum period frequent complaints began to be heard against books which had been prepared and published in the North. The complaints were loudest against the books used as readers. As early as January, 1844, the *Southern Educational Journal*, which is said to have been the first educational magazine published in Alabama, advertised a series of readers which "have been carefully revised and freed from all objectionable pieces." The objection to the readers then in use was that they were "made by people whose political institutions differ from ours, and thrown upon the children of the South, for their discriminating minds to peruse." At a meeting of the Southern Commercial Convention, held in Savannah in December, 1856, and composed of delegates from the Southern and Southwestern States, a committee was requested to take the subject of schoolbooks under consideration and to select and prepare a suitable series of books in "every department of study, from the earliest primer to the highest grade of literature and science, as shall seem to them best qualified to elevate and purify the education of the South." In this action appeared evidence of

the growing sectionalism of the period. The feeling was that "We can, and we must print, publish, and teach our own books; we must not permit our foes to compose our songs and prepare our nursery tales, reserving for ourselves only the privilege of framing husky statutes, and holding commercial conventions."<sup>1</sup> From that time until the outbreak of the Civil War efforts were increased in the South to prepare the texts used in that region and to encourage Southern publishing enterprises. And during the war the Southern States did all they could to supply their own books, though the undertaking was not always successful.

Scribbling on the flyleaves of the books was an interesting juvenile practice then, as now, and was common in all sections of the country. The children did not confine their writing and their scribbling to slates and copybooks. The following are examples of flyleaf scribbings which had wide currency:<sup>2</sup>

If this book should chance to roam  
Box its ears and send it home.

Steal not this book, for if you do,  
Tom Harris will be after you.

Steal not this book for fear of strife  
For the owner carries a big jackknife.

Steal not this book my honest friend  
for fear the gallos will be your end  
The gallos is high, the rope is strong,  
To steal this book you know is wrong.

Let every larking thief be taught,  
This maxim always sure,  
That learning is much better bought  
Than stolen from the poor.  
Then steel not this book.

<sup>1</sup> De Bow's Review, Vol. XXII, pp. 100, 105, 312.

<sup>2</sup> See Johnson, Old-time Schools and Schoolbooks, for other examples of this practice.

Whosoever steals this  
Book away may  
Think on that great  
judgement day when  
Jesus Christ shall  
come and say  
Where is that book you  
stole away.  
Then you will say  
I do not know  
and Christ will say  
go down below.

William Graham his Book  
God grant him grace therein to look,  
that he may run that blessed race  
that heaven may be his dwelling Place.

This Book was bought for good Intent  
pray bring it home when it is lent.

Francis Barton  
is my name america  
is my nation  
pitsfield is my  
dweling place  
and christ is my  
salvation when  
i am dead and  
in my grave and  
all my bones are  
rotton its youl  
remember me or else  
i will be forgotten.

If there should be another flood,  
Then to this book I'd fly ;  
If all the earth should be submerged  
This book would still be dry.

Incompetent teachers, wasteful methods of teaching, harsh discipline, poor physical equipment, crude methods of administration, and lack of organization and of professional supervision were among the defects of the public schools of the antebellum period. This was before normal training had gained a place in this country, and professionally trained teachers and school officers were unknown. Here and there was found a man of culture, refinement, intelligence, and teaching skill, but these qualities were often lacking in most of the teachers of the time. As a rule the occupation of teaching was not held in high esteem.

Many of the teachers were of the adventuresome type, migratory, odd in habits, and frequently questionable in conduct. Too often they had little if any training beyond that which they had received in schools of no higher grade than those in which they themselves taught. As a class they were generally loose and often immoral and lacking in professional standards. They were not only unable to inspire confidence in schools but doubtless served to bring education into public contempt and thus to retard its growth. Examinations for license or certificate to teach, when required at all, were usually oral and nominal and never pretended to be more than an attempt to pass on the applicant's moral character and his ability to conduct a school. And for these "adventure" and wandering teachers the minimum requirements in these respects were not difficult to meet. Ability to teach meant primarily the ability to maintain order in school, and high moral and intellectual standards were not often demanded or expected. Moreover, the local school officials or district trustees had to employ teachers who were available. The need for an adequate supply of well-qualified teachers was relatively as great then as now, though it was not so keenly felt. Short terms, poor wages, the practice of "boarding around," and other factors kept out the best and let in the poorest abilities for successful school work. The following letter, which appeared in a Virginia newspaper in 1843, bears on the point :<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Maddox, *The Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War*, p. 109.



Good men deem it disreputable; think it too laborious; or that it pays too little; other men stay in it, because they can do nothing else; they outbid good teachers; they have some physical misfortune; and parents have to send their children to somebody to get rid of them. . . . In the schoolhouse . . . there is often installed a man with a heart of stone and hands of iron; too lazy to work, too ignorant to live by his wits in any other way, whose chief recommendation is his cheapness and whose chief capacity to instruct is predicated by his incapacity for other employment. . . . Of the progress of the pupils in these temples of indolence but little inquiry is made.

In their messages to the Legislatures the governors often referred to the poor condition of public education in their States and very frequently described the practices of the time. In 1840 Governor Henagan, in his message to the Legislature of South Carolina, had the following to say about teaching and teachers:

It is all important to elevate the character of the teachers in our free schools. The relation between teacher and pupil is of a most responsible nature, and involves all that importance which belongs to authority on the one side and submission on the other. In addition to literary qualifications, no one, if possible, should control the education of the youth of our State who is deficient in moral character. Who, I would ask, are the teachers of our free schools? Are they men to whom the Legislature can commit, with confidence, the great business of education? What is the amount of their literary qualifications, and what the tone of their morality? It is not my design to indulge in unnecessary remarks upon this subject, but truth requires me to say, that as a class they are grossly incompetent to discharge their high and sacred functions. So far as my observation extends, with but few exceptions, they are very ignorant, and possess a very easy morality. With the poor pay allowed them, we cannot reasonably calculate upon a better state of things. The men who take charge of our public schools, and accept so miserable a pittance as the reward of their labors, are they who cannot get employment on any other terms. Necessity forces them to make the offer of their services, and necessity forces the commissioners to accept them. It is now in South Carolina a reproach to be a teacher of a free school, as it is regarded as *prima facie* evidence of a want of qualification. Men will not

embark in the business of education from mere motives of patriotism. You cannot command superior talent and attainment, without adequate compensation. The lawyer, the physician, and the artisan, bestow not their labors gratuitously; and upon what principle of reason or justice can it be expected, that he who has qualified himself, by years of severe toil for the most useful of all professions, shall labor at a rate which will not supply the wants of nature? . . .

Methods of teaching were wasteful and ineffective. The pupils were not graded into groups of similar ages and abilities, and instruction was therefore almost entirely individual. This was made necessary by the great variety of texts in the same subject, by the absence of helpful equipment (such as blackboards, which were late to appear in the South), and by ignorance of the value or possible use of group instruction. The teacher's time was given almost entirely to hearing lessons. The pupils received no instruction from the teacher nor did they have the advantages that come from the group discussion in the modern school. The time of the pupils was thus largely wasted. School exercises were loose and slipshod and encouraged idleness and inattention. Studying or learning in the school was a passive process of the individual rather than an active social process of the group. In many cases the schools were known as "noisy schools" because the children studied their lessons aloud. Discipline was harsh and often cruel, and the routine was marked by multitudes of rules and penalties and the frequent use of the dunce blocks and foolscaps. The following editorials, which appeared in Virginia newspapers during the second quarter of the nineteenth century, are interesting reflections on practices of the time:<sup>1</sup>

What are the beatitudes of a scholastic paradise? To be fagged, flogged, thumped, and coerced to mental labor and constrained in personal liberty. This may be all very proper and salutary (so is physic) but it is not happiness, and there is very, very rarely an instance of a boy, while he is in one of these prisons of the body,

<sup>1</sup>Maddox, *The Free School Idea in Virginia before the Civil War*, pp. 114, 115.

and treadmills of the mind, who is not always wishing to get out of school and to get home.

The memory of the pupil is burdened beyond what the understanding apprehends—a useless storing up of unmeaning facts. All the intellectual powers should be exercised, strengthened, and improved in harmony. There is too little effort made to excite a spirit of inquiry and to arouse the energies of the mind; everything now proceeds on dull routine which gives the pupil a distaste for school and makes him disinclined to the pursuit of knowledge. . . . Let the instruction communicated be adapted to the juvenile capacity of the pupil . . . and in a manner calculated to interest him.

Various features of public educational practices before 1860 are further described in contemporary accounts of the ante-bellum schools. The following is a description of a school and school-master in South Carolina:<sup>1</sup>

To those who have witnessed the state of things in Germany, in the Northern States of our confederacy, in any country in which education is made a department of the government, and compared it with the workings of the voluntary system; who have seen in the one case, the pains taken in the preparation and trial of teachers, the attention paid to school architecture, the attractions thrown around the schoolroom, and the appliances for facilitating both the business of learners and teachers; and have contrasted the life, energy, and spirit everywhere displayed, with the stagnant uniformity which the other case as universally presents, there needs no other argument. They have but to look on this picture, and then on that. No wonder that our children, with their bright morning faces, so often realize Shakspeare's description—"creeping like snail unwillingly to school." There is nothing in the associations of the place to invite either mind or body: "the dismal situation waste and wild," deserves the name which common consent has affixed to it, and we cannot but admire the instinctive sense of fitness which has appropriated these dungeons of the young to localities which the plow has deserted to broomsedge and rabbits.

<sup>1</sup>The Free School System of South Carolina. Columbia, 1856. (Author unknown.)

We remember well the place where our own ideas were first taught to shoot—a log cabin, about eighteen by twenty, the chinks stopped with wood and daubed with clay. One end was almost wholly taken up in a fireplace, in the jambs of which, Noah and his family might have been comfortably accommodated. The chimney was a pen constructed of billets of wood, and open on the side which faced the room, and, though protected from the fire by a thick lining of clay, the destructive element had contrived to elude all obstructions, and to open sundry communications, like that of Pyramus and Thisbe, with the oxygen without. The other end was adorned with a window, a genuine opening, which made no distinction between the air and light, and which scorned the modern contrivances by which one could be admitted to the exclusion of the other. Midway, on one side, was the door, creaking on wooden hinges, and near it, there hung, except when it was in use (and that was not seldom—for, in schoolboy phrase, it was kept hot), a forked stick, which served as a pass to all whom nature or idleness rendered uneasy in their straitened circumstances. No one ever dared to leave the room, however stringent the call, when that stick was missing from its peg.

The other side was minus a log; the vacant space being used as a light to the general writing-desk of the school, which consisted of a plank extended horizontally the whole length of the room. At a given signal, every member of our little establishment was required to take down his copy-book, put himself at this desk, and set about the serious operation of chirography. During this exercise, our backs were turned to the master; and well do we recollect the generous indignation with which we looked upon his unfairness in stealing up behind us, slyly inspecting our performances, and, when they were not to his mind, giving us a demonstration of his presence, which left the fingers in unfortunate trim for further achievements. Our knuckles ache now, albeit more than thirty winters have passed over our heads, when we think of that formidable ruler. What multiplied the danger of slips (the technical name for every kind of blunder, from a mistake in spelling to a mistake in marking), was the manner in which we kept our ink. We had to put it in small vials, and as they were easily upset, we guarded against the chances of loss by putting in enough of cotton to absorb it. It not unfrequently happened, that in squeezing out the ink, a small fragment of the cotton would stick to the pen, and the consequence was a mark, a huge sprawl, which sad experience taught us was like the seal of fate. Our benches had the merit of training



us to early habits of self-denial and mortification of the flesh ; we were sure that, for the first year of our schoolboy experience, our feet never rested on the floor when our thighs and legs made any assignable angle ; and the only relief we could obtain when the forked stick was missing, was to convert our bodies into an inclined plane, by propping the small of the back against the edge of the bench.

Our dominie was, in many respects, a good-natured man, but even Job's patience could not have been proof against the trials he endured in the grievous misprints of text-books. By some odd fatality, every hard sum in Daboll's *Arithmetic* had the answer wrong ; and we shall never forget the earnestness with which the good old man, after having tugged for hours over a tough question which had stumped our feebleness capacities, would expatiate upon the blunders of Daboll, and the merits of Pike, the book which he had studied, and which he recommended to us as the very pink of perfection in figures. Misfortunes, however, never come single ; a copy of Pike was at length procured ; we prized it as a treasure, and bore it in triumph to our venerable teacher. His eyes glistened with delight, and reciprocated his joy, in the hope that the course of arithmetic, unlike that of true love, might for once run smooth. *O fallacem hominum spem, fragilemque fortunam !* What was our consternation and amazement, when we found upon trial that we were still the sport of mischievous printers, and that every hard sum, even in Pike, had the answer wrong !

Our teacher was skilled in Latin ; but he would never consent to use any other copies of the classics but those of Clark, which contained the text and an English translation in parallel columns. In justice, however, to his prudence, we must say, that he always advised us to put our hands over the English when we were studying the Latin—a thing which we never failed to do when we went to recite, provided we had gotten the English by heart ; but, by a singular coincidence, whenever our memories were treacherous, our fingers were slippery. One exercise of the school, at least, was a hearty one—the closing labor of the day. At a given hour, the teacher vociferated at the top of his voice "spellings," and every urchin flew like lightning to his dictionary. The scene that ensued beggars all description ; it was not exactly like the roar of many waters, or the sound of mighty thunderings, but there was a noise—and such a noise as threw Bedlam into the shade, and what a glorious time was that when, at the close of the lesson there was a general rush, first for hats, caps, and bonnets, buckets, baskets, and bottles—and then for the door !

This was what is called an old field school, and we have reason to suspect that such institutions are something more than traditions of the past. For two years we are sure that we never saw the face of a patron within the walls of the cabin. It was a wealthy neighborhood; two of the trustees, if trustees they might be called, were worth a hundred negroes apiece; and they had sons who were receiving the elements, on which a liberal education was to be afterwards engrafted. They had confidence in the master, and they left everything to his discretion. They had done their part when they employed him and gave him a place to teach in. There may be exceptions to this lax method of proceeding—cases in which a real supervision is exercised, but they are only exceptions, and not the rule. The voluntary system, for the most part, terminates the care and responsibilities of the neighborhood in the settlement of the teacher. He makes no complaints of his accommodations—it is not his place; he is satisfied with whatever text-books are at hand, or those which are most familiar to himself, and institutes such discipline as his own indolence and desire of pleasing may suggest, without reference to the dispositions, capacities, and aptitudes of the child.

A very popular practice was that of “turning out” the teacher a few days before the close of the term. The extract below is descriptive of the custom in South Carolina near the close of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but the attempt here described was not so successful as were most attempts at “turning out” the teacher:<sup>1</sup>

This was at a time when it was the custom for the boys to turn out the master a day or two before the term of school ended. Schools were seldom taken up for a longer period than from three to six months. The first quarter of Mr. Quigley’s school was about to terminate, and the big boys agreed to turn him out and make him treat before the beginning of the second quarter. It was the teacher’s habit, every day, to take a walk of fifteen or twenty minutes, about eleven o’clock in the morning, calling to his desk some of the larger boys to keep order during his absence. No sooner had he descended the foot of the hill leading toward the spring than the three larger boys in the school began barricading the door. There was only one door to the cabin, and by taking up the benches, which were ten or fifteen feet long,

<sup>1</sup> Sims, *The Story of my Life*. New York, 1884.

and crossing them diagonally, one to the right and another to the left, in the door, the benches projecting as much outside as inside the house, a complete barricade was formed which could easily be defended against assault from without. When the old gentleman saw what had been done he became perfectly furious. He was so violent that he easily intimidated the ringleaders. He swore that he would not give up, and would not treat, and that he was coming into the house whether or no. At last he commenced to climb on the roof of the house, and to throw a part of it off. It was covered with boards held on by poles. The ringleaders, seeing that he was sure to effect an entrance anyway, became intimidated, and agreed to remove the barricade if he would promise not to whip them. After parleying a little while, he promised that he would not flog the ringleaders. He was a man of the most violent temper, and, although fifty-five years of age, he was very strong and active. The ringleader of the gang was young Bob Stafford. He was tall, slender, and very strong; but was evidently afraid of the teacher, and showed the white feather decidedly. As Mr. Quigley came in he walked up to young Stafford, who stood trembling in the middle of the room, and said: "Sir," as he drew his big fist back, "I have a great mind to run my fist right through your body!" I had always thought Mr. Quigley would do whatever he said he would do, and I remembered with what horror I looked at Stafford, expecting every minute to see the old gentleman's fist come out through his back.

The following account, from the same source as the preceding extract, shows that occasionally a really human-interest incident broke in upon the dull and tasteless routine of school life and "livened things up":

The next school that I attended was taught by Mr. John E. Sanderson, an Irishman. I was now seven years old. He taught school alternately in the Waxhaws and Hanging-Rock neighborhoods. The Waxhaws were in the northern part of the county, and the Hanging-Rock neighborhood in the southern. He was a fine teacher for arithmetic and writing. But he was very cruel, and whipped the boys often without any provocation at all. He thrashed them even when they were nearly grown, although he was a small man. But he was so violent in his temper and in the government of his school that the larger boys were afraid of him. There was only one day in the

week when the school was happy, and that was Monday. He always got drunk on Saturday night, remained so all day Sunday, and came to school Monday morning as full as he could be, and then was always jolly and good-tempered. He would then pinch the girls' arms, and say witty things to the boys, and he never whipped anybody on Monday, so we were always happy on that day. But when Tuesday arrived he reverted to his old ways of severity. We had one poor fellow named Ike Tillman in school. He was an orphan, and was for many years under the tuition of Mr. Sanderson, and wherever he located a school, whether in one part of the county or the other, Ike Tillman always followed him. He was a bad boy without being very bad. He was very indolent, but not stupid. Mr. Sanderson had begun to whip him when he was seven or eight years old, and the boy had got so used to it that he expected to be flogged every day, even when he was eighteen years old and nearly six feet high. And he was seldom disappointed. At last one or two of the boys, about his own age, said to him, one day, "Ike, you're too big to be flogged; if I were you, I would show fight next time."

"Well," he said, "boys, if you'll stand by me I will do it; but if you don't I can't afford it."

They agreed to stand by him. Ike had a slate about twelve by ten inches, and the wooden frame had been broken and lost. The next day Mr. Sanderson called up Ike for a thrashing. Ike came up, with his slate in his hand, leaning it against his bosom, and he said:

"Mr. Sanderson, you have been whipping me, sir, ever since I was a little boy. I am now a man. I will be d—d if I'll stand it any longer! If you come a step nearer to me, I will split your d—d old head open with this slate!"

Mr. Sanderson was surprised, and he changed his tactics immediately, and said:

"Why, Ike, why, you would not strike me with that slate, would you?"

Ike said: "You come one step toward me and I'll split you open, clean down from your head to your backbone, and," said he, "these boys have promised to see me through the fight!"

"Well, Ike," said Mr. Sanderson, "we have lived together a long time, but I don't think we can afford to be enemies; and, if you are willing, we'll let by-gones be by-gones, and we'll enter from this day on into a new relationship." The old man saw that the game was up and too strong for him; and, sure enough, so far as Ike Tillman and



the larger boys were concerned, the old man was taught a lesson that he never forgot afterward. But he was so cruel to me and my little brother, and other little children, that I swore in my heart that, if I ever got to be a man, I would thrash him, if he were as old as Methuselah. I remember one Saturday meeting him on the road, near my father's house. My little brother and I were riding double on a little pony. He was riding in the opposite direction, meeting us. He was very drunk; and, as soon as he got near enough to us, he commenced striking at us with his stick, and really hurt my brother very much. We got away as fast as we could, and galloped home to tell my father what had happened. But Sanderson was the only teacher in the county, and if a boy didn't go to school to him there was no school for him to go to, and parents had to put up with his cruelties to their children, because they could not help themselves. They were afraid to speak to him about his treatment for fear he would dismiss their children from school.

School practices in the South have recently undergone many improvements, but it was many years after the close of the war before any great advance was made in school equipment, in support, in the preparation of an adequate supply of teachers, in textbooks, or in other parts of school work discussed in this chapter. The results of that conflict and the disturbing effects of the years which followed served to delay a wholesome development of public education. Gradually, however, new influences began to be felt. The ideas and methods advocated by Pestalozzi, which, with the exception of the Fellenberg manual-labor movement, were not generally adopted before 1860, after that date began to appear through information concerning their use in European schools. This information had been circulated through official state reports and educational periodicals and through the reports of travelers who had visited and studied schools abroad. Improvements began slowly to be made in textbooks which helped to improve instruction, new subjects began to come in and to broaden the curriculum, attempts were made to grade the schools and the pupils into classes, and interest in high-school instruction slowly developed. The rise and development of normal schools

and other teacher-training agencies helped to raise the standards of teaching and promoted the cause of education by basing instruction on the principles of psychology. But these changes came in the South only after many years of toil and effort and of determination to rebuild the resources depleted by the war and to restore the public confidence which had been destroyed by the bitterness of reconstruction. The effect of those years, from which the South is only now recovering, will be studied in chapters that are to follow.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Why was the ante-bellum curriculum confined almost exclusively to the three R's? List the subjects required by law to be taught in the elementary school in your State and explain the purpose of each. Trace the expansion of the curriculum since 1860. How has it expanded during the past twenty years?

2. What are the advantages of uniform schoolbooks? What are the disadvantages? How are textbooks adopted in your State for the elementary schools? for the high schools?

3. What are the characteristics of a good spelling book? Compare the old method or methods of teaching spelling with the methods of teaching that subject today. What was the value of the old-time "spelling bees" or "spelling matches"?

4. Compare the early readers with those in use in the schools of your State today.

5. Why was arithmetic given such an important place in the ante-bellum curriculum? What was the purpose of teaching the subject? What are the characteristics of a good textbook on arithmetic? Study the examples from Pike, given in this chapter, and point out their advantages and disadvantages.

6. Explain why geography came slowly to be a distinct subject in the schools. How did the purpose and method of early geography-teaching differ from the purpose and method of teaching that subject today? How has the method of teaching the subject changed in recent years? Account for this change. In what respect is geography a "practical" subject? a "moral" subject? a "cultural" subject?

7. How have textbooks on grammar and methods of teaching the subject changed in recent years?

8. Compare the early histories with the texts in use in your school today. What was the purpose of the subject when it first appeared? What is the purpose of the subject today? List the characteristics of a good textbook on history and the qualifications of a good teacher of the subject.

9. Why was discipline in the ante-bellum school so severe? Account for the poor buildings and meager equipment of the early schools.

10. Explain the low esteem in which the ante-bellum schoolmaster was held by the public generally. Trace the development of the training and certification of teachers in your State. Why were there so few women teaching school in the South before 1860?

11. Account for the lack of supervision in the ante-bellum schools. What improvement in supervision has been made in your State in this respect in recent years? What is the present status of rural supervision in your county?

12. Account for the fact that there has always been a lack of adequately trained teachers in the South. Why has this lack been so keenly felt in very recent years?

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## CHAPTER IX

### REORGANIZATION AFTER THE WAR

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. The so-called "reconstruction period" proved more destructive than the war to the resources of public education. It served also to give rise and currency to inaccurate and loose statements concerning the extent of ante-bellum educational facilities in the South.

2. Careful studies, however, now show that the schools in the South before 1860 were not altogether unlike schools in other sections of the country during the ante-bellum period.

3. Comparisons of education in the various sections of the country before 1860 have led to the specific question of the educational influence of reconstruction in the South. This can be answered only by a careful study of affairs in that section between 1865 and 1867 and between 1867 and 1876.

4. Several of the States sought, under the presidential plan of reconstruction (1865 to 1868), to provide educational plans to meet the changed conditions, but the adoption of the congressional plan of restoring the South prevented any marked success in such undertakings.

5. The constitutional conventions held under this plan were extremely radical, and wholesome educational interest was generally deadened by the agitation of the mixed-school question. But the educational provisions of the new constitutions were somewhat more specific than ante-bellum provisions had been.

6. The school laws enacted under the new constitutions were generally more advanced in mandatory provisions for schools than was the legislation before the war. But adverse conditions which grew out of the years of reconstruction prevented the successful operation of the schools for many years after that period had formally closed.

The rebuilding and reorganization of a public-school system after the war was one of the many disheartening tasks which confronted the people of the South. The question of the education of all the people soon became more critically important



there than in any other part of the Union. The problem was complicated and discouraging. The South emerged from the four years' conflict with the loss of a large part of her white male population and the complete loss of practically all her accumulated capital. Not only was it difficult to restore the material resources necessary for the building of schools, but the iniquities of the reconstruction period made an immediate and complete restoration of public confidence tedious and well-nigh impossible.

In fact, the so-called restoration period proved more destructive than the war itself. It robbed the South of what the war had spared, and by looting treasuries and public funds, by imposing enormous taxes, by practicing fraud and extravagance, and by piling up colossal bonded debts it succeeded in running its corrupt fingers deep "into the pockets of posterity" and left in those States, already reduced to penury by the terrors of war, a debt of more than \$300,000,000. Thus many of the richest portions of the South were wasted and shorn of their prosperity; industry was checked in its development; idleness and fraud were widely encouraged; local justice was thwarted and put in contempt; the people were ruled by corrupt and reckless officials, and almost all tendencies to good government were stifled. In this experience is the explanation of the South's educational backwardness following the war, and of the indictment, so frequently made, that the South hates taxes and tax collectors and distrusts all "public welfare" plans and movements. In this experience may likewise be found the explanation of the South's so-called devotion to a sort of laissez-faire theory in education and of the frequent extreme applications of the principle of local government in educational administration.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the actual educational influence of the reconstruction period a variety of loose and inaccurate statements have been made. It was once popular to assert that there was no public-school system in the South prior to the war, that little effort for education had been made there before that time, and that a

<sup>1</sup> See Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*.

lack of educational tradition for all the people was largely responsible for the war and its deplorable consequences. Such education as was given in the ante-bellum South was held by some writers to have been based on wrong principles, which finally produced the secessionist and the rebellion. It was also believed that the poor whites of the South were in dense ignorance and that this ignorance had been exploited by unprincipled leaders and made the foundation for secession and the Confederacy. In still other quarters it was believed that the white leaders of the South frequently opposed public education for the masses of the people and that all classes of the native whites opposed the education of the Negroes after their emancipation.

Evidence of these opinions accumulated for many years and became abundant. The war had scarcely closed before they were finding expression throughout the country. The speeches in the annual meeting of the National Teachers' Association, which was held in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in August, 1865, gave expression to the theory that the lately closed rebellion had been a "war of education and patriotism against ignorance and barbarism." In his opening speech the president of that organization said at that time:.

All through the loyal States our principal institutions have prospered to a most wonderful degree. How has it been with the States in rebellion? Scarcely an institution of learning survived. . . . In all free States the public-school system prevailed, and in most was administered with great efficiency, giving a good education alike to the poor and the rich. . . . How was it in the States where the institution of slavery prevailed? There was no common-school system. Exceptions there were in some of the cities—but as a general fact, the statement is correct. The children of a large portion of the population were, by law, prohibited the advantages of an education, and a large portion of the free population were virtually shut out from the means of an early culture. . . . Thus has our land been deluged in blood. Sagacious politicians of the South saw the tendencies, and attributed the evil to the quality of Northern education. Without stopping to defend the character of our educational processes in the North, let it be

observed that the root of the difficulty lay not in this direction, but in the fact of a diffused and universal education at the North and a very limited education at the South. No two sections of the country, though under the same government, can dwell together in peace and harmony, where the advantages of education are widely dissimilar. . . .

There is but one alternative—education must be diffused throughout the masses of the South. Black and white—"poor white" and rich white—all must be educated. Not to educate them is to prepare for another Civil War. . . .

Before the war no southern teacher dared to discuss the whole truth at the South. . . . Can we not as educators go boldly into Southern States and teach the truth and the whole truth? If not, I pray God that martial law may prevail in every Southern State, till Northern men, or any other men, may discuss educational, social, political, and moral and religious topics in any part of the South as freely as in Faneuil Hall. This right we must have. . . .

The result of the war was also regarded as affording opportunities for extending universal education in the Southern States. That region was now viewed as a vast missionary field, and this view was one of the defenses of the policy finally adopted for reconstructing those States. As a result the decade following the close of the war witnessed much misdirected missionary zeal and visionary effort. With the single exception of the Peabody Fund, which had a lasting beneficial influence on education in the South, most of such missionary activities were blindly made and with little or no sympathetic understanding of local conditions and local needs. Enthusiasts on the subject of educational and missionary labors in the South failed pitifully to consider the temper of the popular mind and made the mistake of believing that the chief difference between the white man and the Negro was the enforced ignorance of the latter. This difference, in the opinion of such enthusiasts, could be readily removed. In a pamphlet issued near the close of the war a Massachusetts minister said:

We have four millions of liberated slaves who should be educated. They ask it of our hands, and the world expects us to do it; because in the very act of emancipation there is the sacred promise to educate.

Slavery has kept the word education out of our constitution. Now four millions of starved minds implore its introduction. . . . Their former masters would not take the trouble to educate them, and would generally refuse to pay a local tax for the purpose. Since the Christian era there has not been such an opportunity for such a country to do such work; the noblest work man can do. . . . The old slave States are to be missionary grounds for the national schoolmaster. . . .

Largely in this manner there developed the theory that the schools which did exist in the South before 1860 were altogether unlike those found in other sections of the country. A careful study, however, of evidence found in school laws, reports of administrative officers, school statistics, messages of the governors, and other documentary materials in the various States reveals the fact that in origin, organization, and results, so far as results can be compared, educational effort in one section of the Union before the war was very similar to that in other sections.

Most of the state school systems in this country passed through a storm-and-stress period in their development. In practically all of them there were educational landmarks which were made by long periods of agitation and the resulting growth of wholesome educational sentiment. The so-called early educational revival in North Carolina, for example, from the establishment of the literary fund in 1825 to the passage of the first school law fourteen years later, is practically paralleled by the educational campaign of Pennsylvania in the early thirties. The educational work of Horace Mann in Massachusetts and of Henry Barnard in Connecticut was not altogether unlike the work, at somewhat later dates, of Wiley in North Carolina and of Perry in Alabama. Early school legislation in many of the Southern States was framed on a theory very similar to that on which it was set up in New York,—that the income from the literary fund and a small tax were sufficient for educational purposes. The theory on which ante-bellum schools in Georgia were set up was not unlike the theory on which early schools in Pennsylvania operated.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. xi.



From such comparisons as are usually made, however, general opinions have been formed which have led to the more specific question, What influence did the so-called reconstruction régime actually have on education in the South? Obviously a satisfactory answer to the question can be had only by a detailed and careful comparison of ante-bellum conditions with the reconstruction and post-bellum conditions. Such comparison requires a clear differentiation both of the periods between 1865 and 1876 and the plans proposed for restoring the South, and of the classes of men who took part in the formal restoration and in the work which followed.

Of the two plans proposed for restoring the South to normal relations with the Union the presidential plan of reconstruction, from 1865 to 1867, was an attempt to enlist the coöperation of the native white citizens. Under the congressional plan, however, from 1867 to 1876, three classes participated in political affairs: the native whites, the Negro freemen, and men from the North. The native whites were sharply divided into two classes, the conservative and the radicals, or "scalawags"; the Negroes were the most homogeneous, usually of the same mind and easily influenced; while the men from the North, popularly known as "carpetbaggers," were, from the South's point of view, predominantly radical. The reconstruction conventions were composed largely of negroes, carpetbaggers, and scalawags, and this was largely true of many legislative bodies of that period.

The presidential plan of restoration began before the war closed. Provisional governments had been established by President Lincoln in Arkansas, in Louisiana, and in Tennessee during the war, and he had recognized the new state of West Virginia, which was organized out of Virginia. Congress, however, was opposed to Lincoln's plan, but had not entirely and definitely rejected it when Lee surrendered. After Lincoln's death President Johnson sought to continue his predecessor's plan and, accordingly, published the amnesty proclamation, and in the summer of 1865 appointed provisional governors for North Carolina,

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Texas. Each of these States was required to organize a provisional administration and to call a constitutional convention which was to abolish slavery, declare the ordinance of secession null and void, repudiate all debts made to carry on the war, and provide a new state constitution based on the constitution and laws of 1861, but without slavery. Elections were to be held in each State, and the provisional governors were to be succeeded by those governors elected under this plan.

This program was followed in the main. The Southern States ratified the Thirteenth Amendment (which abolished slavery), elected their senators to Congress, and were ready for readmission. But Congress refused to admit the Southern representatives; and the governments of the Southern States continued provisional and subject to constant interference by President Johnson. Meanwhile, the breach between the executive and Congress was widening, and the latter proposed the Fourteenth Amendment and made its ratification by the legislative bodies of the Southern States a condition precedent to the restoration of those States. This amendment guaranteed to the freedmen citizenship and equality in civil rights and disqualified for state and federal office all persons who had participated in the rebellion after having taken the oath to support the Constitution of the United States. Many of the leading white people of the South were thus disqualified. President Johnson opposed the amendment, and enough of the Southern States had rejected it when Congress met in December, 1865, to indicate the prevailing opinion there.

The agitation of the "rebel" question and congressional investigations, which looked to a safe way of dealing with the South, made the year 1866 one of heated campaigning. The heat of the campaign was intensified by legislation passed in the Southern States in 1865-1866 and known as the "black codes." The task of the lawmakers in the South at that time was to express the change of the black man from a state of slavery to a state of citizenship. Laws had to be made to regulate his family

life, his morals, and his conduct; to give him the legal right to hold property and to testify in court and the right of personal protection; to provide for his education, which hitherto had been forbidden in the South; to prevent him from being exploited by the unscrupulous; and to protect the white people from his lawlessness. Many laws relating to the whites were extended to the blacks, but sometimes, of course, with slight changes; and those laws which made any distinctions of race served as convenient campaign material and were greatly criticized in the North, which generally believed them to be intended to reënslave the negro. Moreover, by the spring of 1867 the issue between Congress and President Johnson was sharply drawn. All the Southern States except Tennessee had rejected the Fourteenth Amendment, and it became known that the provisional state governments in the South would be superseded by military governments and that suffrage would be extended to the negro. The presidential plan had failed, and Congress took entire charge of reconstructing the South.

What attempts at educational reorganization and improvement were made during the presidential plan of reconstruction? In the preceding chapter it was noted that many of the States which seceded actually accomplished but little for education during the war, although some undertook to continue the schools as long as possible and in a few States schools continued to operate until the fall of the Confederacy. Occasional educational legislation was enacted in nearly all the Southern States during the armed conflict, but the confusion and stress of the times made the enforcement of such legislation almost impossible. With the organization of provisional governments in a few of the States during the war and in others under the presidential proclamation of May 29, 1865, an educational interest appeared which was indeed remarkable for the conditions of the period.

In January, 1864, Governor Isaac Murphy, the leader of the movement which sought, under Lincoln's proclamation of December 8, 1863, to form a State government in Arkansas, urged in

his message to the Legislature that legal provisions for educational opportunities be made for every child in the State "and not only give the opportunity, but make the education of the rising generation a duty to the State, to be enforced by proper penalties. Ignorance leads to slavery; intelligence to freedom." The legislative committee on education made a lengthy and valuable report on the subject and recommended a state superintendent of schools and property taxation for school purposes. But confused local conditions and a depleted treasury prevented action.

The Legislature of 1866-1867, almost entirely conservative in its composition, passed a school law which was advanced and modern in respect to its provisions for educational administration and support. Under this law the schools were to be maintained by public taxation for three months in the year. A State superintendent of schools was chosen, but the validity of his election was denied by a military order of General Ord, commanding the military district in which Arkansas was situated, and the superintendent was not allowed to exercise the duties of his office. Moreover, military authority held that the services of the office were unnecessary. Some schools were opened under the new law, however, which in many respects became the basis of public-school education in Arkansas and provided resources which made possible the later establishment of schools in that State. But the sums collected for school purposes at this time, amounting to about \$65,000, later served as handy pocket change for the reconstructionists.

Alabama's constitution of 1865 ordered the enactment of proper laws for the encouragement of schools and the preservation of the school funds. It also required a state superintendent, county superintendents, and local trustees for the supervision of the schools, such as had served under the ante-bellum organization. In accordance with these provisions a law was enacted in February, 1867, which created a creditable school system open to "every child between the ages of six and twenty years." School officers were appointed, and the schools were rapidly being brought



into working order in a large part of the State when congressional reconstruction began. But funds provided for schools were used, by reconstruction legislation of 1868 and 1869, "to meet other pressing debts of the State," and in this manner were diverted from their lawful uses.

Tennessee undertook the rebuilding of its school system in 1865, when the appropriate legislative committee began to study the school systems of other States. In that year appropriations were made for public schools, and shortly afterward legal provisions were made for the schools in Memphis, although these provisions were substantially a reenactment of the laws of 1860. In 1866 the ante-bellum property tax for school purposes was levied, and later this tax was raised from two and one-half cents to twenty cents on the hundred dollars' valuation, which increased the available school funds for 1867 to about \$660,000. This law, which originated with the teachers' association of the State, was very advanced and contemplated schools for both races. It provided for an adequate administrative organization and for the maintenance of schools for not less than five months in the year, with separate schools for colored children. The records of the legislative bodies from 1865 to 1867 show considerable educational interest in that State. But the popular mind was confused, and distrust prevailed everywhere. Moreover, there was considerable trouble over the Bank of Tennessee, in which the ante-bellum literary fund was invested and through which it was eventually lost.

In Mississippi there was evidence of unusual interest in schools for both white and colored children. The attitude of the conservative element on the subject of Negro education was very liberal, and as early as 1866 the planters were urged to establish schools on their farms for the education of Negro children. The following year the State teachers' association met in Jackson and advised that public-school facilities be provided for the freedmen, and such facilities would likely have been provided by the native white people "had not the 'carpetbaggers' forestalled their

action." Several newspapers of the State also urged provision for negro education before the beginning of the congressional plan of reconstruction and encouraged Southern men in that undertaking, and in July, 1866, it was stated that "organized plans for the intellectual improvement of the negro are being generally adopted throughout the State." A school for colored children was in operation at Holly Springs under the superintendence of Judge Watson, and Kinloch Falkner, a former secretary of State in Mississippi, was one of the teachers. A similar school was set up at Oxford by Chancellor Waddell and several professors of the university of the State.<sup>1</sup> The constitution of Texas of 1866 contemplated and provided for schools for negroes as well as for whites, and the constitution of 1869, known as the reconstruction constitution, did not materially change the instrument of 1866 in this respect.

In Georgia, North Carolina, and other States there appeared also an unexpected interest in education from 1865 to 1867, and vigorous efforts were generally made to adjust educational plans to the changed condition of the times. The Legislature of Georgia in December, 1866, enacted legislation to provide for a general system of schools, a state superintendent, county superintendents or commissioners, local trustees, and for support by a county tax supplemented by the state school fund. The act was not to go into effect, however, until after January, 1868, postponement having been agreed upon on account of the poverty-stricken condition of the people. Before that time the congressional plan of restoring the South was set in motion. Meantime the Legislature had made provisions for the state university, and in some of the cities of the State the organization of the public educational work was making some headway.

Here, as in other States, however, the uncertainty of the legality of its acts prevented the Legislature from making more definite enactments for schools. The ante-bellum literary funds were lost,

<sup>1</sup> See Noble, *Forty Years of the Public Schools of Mississippi*.

the people were impoverished as a result of the war, and the former means of school support were cut off almost entirely. In some cases policies of economy were adopted. In the main, however, the leaders of the period recognized the changes which the result of the war had produced and courageously set themselves to the task of readjustment; and but for the inauguration of the congressional plan of restoring the South, the educational needs of both white and colored children would have been more properly cared for during the years following the war. The obstacles to peace and good order could have been more easily removed, and the public schools—which later became so unpopular because of the circumstances which surrounded their establishment—could have grown in popular favor and could have become more readily both the chief pride of the State and the principal means of solving the great problem which the war left for solution to the white people of the South.

The radical members of Congress triumphed over the Democrats, the moderate Republicans, and the president, and, on March 2, 1867, passed over the president's veto the first so-called reconstruction act, which reduced the Southern States to military provinces and set up in them the rule of martial law. The States were divided into five military districts, which were put under Federal military commanders. State intervention was not to be permitted, although the provisional civil administrative power of the State could be used by the commanders in their discretion. The authority and rule of martial law were to continue until the people of the "said rebel states" formed constitutions in conformity with the Constitution of the United States and framed by conventions of delegates elected by the male citizens of "twenty-one years of age and upward of whatever race, color, or previous condition . . . except such as may be disfranchised for participation in the rebellion, or for felony at common law." When such constitutions had been framed, ratified by the electorate, and approved by Congress, and when the legislative bodies elected under the new constitutions had ratified the

proposed Fourteenth Amendment, the States were to be entitled to representation in Congress and were to be admitted. Until the States were reconstructed in the manner prescribed by this act, the civil government in existence in them was "to be deemed provisional only, and in all respects subject to the permanent authority of the United States at any time to abolish, modify, control, or supersede the same."

A supplementary act was passed March 23 "to provide for the more efficient government of the rebel States" and to facilitate their restoration. This act called for the registration of all men who could qualify under the act of March 2 and directed the commanders of the various military districts to order an election for the choice of delegates to a constitutional convention of each State. The purpose of these two acts was purely political. They were formed primarily to give the ballot to the Negro in the ten Southern States which had rejected the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and their operation was incidental to this one object.

The election of delegates to the constitutional conventions was held by order of the commanders of the various military districts, and the conventions met in the fall and winter of 1867-1868. The composition of these bodies was altogether unlike anything ever before seen in the South. They consisted of scalawags, or native whites who were out of sympathy with the South and who favored the congressional plan of restoration; carpet-baggers, Northern men who went South after the war, who favored the plan of Congress, and who were later charged with exploiting the people and seeking private gain; ignorant negroes; and a few conservative whites.

In the Virginia convention there were 22 native negroes. Thirteen of the members were scalawags; 14 came from New York; 3 each from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and England; and one each came from Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, Maryland, Washington City, South Carolina, Ireland, Scotland, and Canada. The "radicals" numbered 72 and the "conservatives" 33.



Of the 124 delegates to the South Carolina convention 48 were white and 76 were negroes (49 of whom were South Carolina blacks). There were only 4 conservatives in the convention. Of the white delegation 23 were native South Carolinians; others came from Massachusetts, North Carolina, England, Georgia, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Ireland, Prussia, and Denmark. Twenty-three of the entire white delegation and 59 of the negro members paid no taxes whatever. North Carolina's convention contained 120 radicals and 13 conservatives. Eight of the members were carpetbaggers and 15 were negroes.

The convention in Texas consisted of 12 conservatives and 78 radicals, 9 of whom were negroes. Florida's convention consisted of 46 delegates, 18 of whom were negroes, and all other members were scalawags and carpetbaggers except 2 who were conservatives. The negro members were field hands, barbers, and hack drivers. The convention in Georgia contained 37 negroes, 12 conservatives, 9 carpetbaggers, and a very large number of scalawags. Mississippi's body, which became known as the "Black and Tan Convention," had only 19 conservatives and 107 radicals; 15 of the radicals were negroes, 18 were carpetbaggers, and the others were scalawags. The Alabama convention contained 2 conservatives and 98 radicals, of whom 18 were negroes and 38 carpetbaggers. The members of this body were described as "worthless vagabonds—homeless, houseless, drunken knaves." The composition of the conventions of Arkansas and Louisiana was similar to that of the other States.

Conservative opinion of these bodies was expressed in somewhat vigorous terms in the press and elsewhere in the various States. The day following the meeting of the Virginia convention the *Richmond Dispatch*,<sup>1</sup> spoke editorially of it as having been "elected under the unconstitutional reconstruction laws of Congress. . . . Created by fraud and outrage—outrage of the Constitution and every principle of humanity, and every dictate of

<sup>1</sup>December 4, 1867.

wisdom, its life must be brief and its deeds die with it." On the same day that the North Carolina convention met the *Raleigh Sentinel* said:

The pillars of the capitol should be hung in mourning today for the murdered sovereignty of North Carolina. In the hall where have been collected, in days gone by, the wisdom, the patriotism, the virtue of the State, there assembles this morning a body convened by an order of Congress, in violation of the Constitution of the United States and in utter disregard of the Constitution of North Carolina, a body which, in no sense, as a whole, represents the true people of the State, which has not been elected according to our laws nor chosen by those to whom those laws have committed the right of suffrage. In the seats which have been filled by some of the best and truest sons of North Carolina, will be found a number of negroes, a still larger number of men who have no interests or sentiments in common with our people, but who were left in our midst by the receding tide of war, and yet others who have proven false to their mother and have leagued with her enemies.

Nothing so well illustrates the character of these conventions as the debates on the persistent question of mixed schools, a subject which arose soon after the committees on education were appointed, in many of the States became a heated issue immediately, and throughout the South generally had a far-reaching and damaging effect on the subject of schools. At one time or another during reconstruction mixed schools came in for more or less consideration in practically all the Southern States, either in the convention or the Legislature and sometimes in both. A few examples will serve to illustrate.

In Virginia, where legislation which looked to the establishment of mixed schools had little chance of passage, the matter began to be warmly discussed as soon as the report of the committee on education was presented. A conservative member offered as an amendment to the report "that in no case shall white and colored children be taught at the same time and in the same house," and this amendment greatly agitated the negro members,

one of whom spoke with much feeling. He "didn't want to see no such claw [clause] in the constitution, and the fust thing we knew, der would be similar claws regards waship [worship]. Ez fer dis, dere was worser company of white children dan he wished his children to be wid; and dese was secesh children." He wanted "loil [loyal] school and loil children," but he did not want "dis claw to commodate de prejudices of rebels and seceshes," because he regarded himself as high over "a rebel and traitor ez heaven was over hell."

Another negro member vehemently opposed "dis old slavery notion of having two school-houses war one would do." Another member proposed the amendment that the public schools of the State should be free and open alike to all classes, that "no child pubill [sic] or scholar" should be rejected from such schools on account of race, color, or any other distinction, and that the Legislature should not have "pour" [power] to make any law that would admit of any invidious distinction. Another stated that the "questarn was equal rights and justice to all men, erregardless of race and color," though he did not wish to "detain the floor long, as you all knows I is not conversial with school matters, and am new in de issues of de day." Another declared that if the right of mixed schools were not guaranteed to the negroes the carpetbaggers would be forced to pack up and leave the State. In urging a settlement of "dis question in framing the organical law," he urged that but for "de bone, and de sinews, and de muscle, and de skin, which was de colored people, de Rippublican party would hardly be a skeleton." The protests of the negro members and their repeated threats to divide the Republican party on the issue were fruitless, however, and the proposed provision for mixed schools failed by a large majority to be inserted in the constitution. The subject later appeared in the Legislature when the school law was being framed, but it met the same fate there as befell it in the convention.

The case was different in South Carolina, where the committee on education reported that all schools, colleges, and universities

of the State supported by the public funds should be free and open to all children without regard to race or color. This section of the report was referred to the committee for further consideration, but it emerged later substantially unchanged. The debate was heated. In discussing the mixed-school plan a white delegate who favored the congressional plan of reconstruction pointed out that opposition to the education of the negro was rapidly dying out in South Carolina. He cited as evidence measures taken by various organizations, conventions, and religious conferences which had met for the purpose of making educational provision for the children of the negro race. Mixed schools, he argued, would not increase sympathy for but hostility to the education of the negro; moreover, such schools would be attended by the colored children only. A negro member believed that the negroes should treat the white people with leniency and charity, as a magnanimous Christian people would treat their former enemies, but such liberality needed to be compatible with the black man's safety. He believed that no distinction should be made in the schoolhouse and in the church.

The debate concluded by the chairman of the committee, the Reverend E. L. Cardozo, a negro member who finally became treasurer of the State. He argued that the whole scheme of reconstruction was antagonistic to the wishes of South Carolinians and that the mixed-school plan was a legitimate part of that scheme. Race prejudices could best be removed, he said, by forcing the white children and the negro children "to mingle in school together and to associate generally." In some communities, however, it might be necessary to provide separate schools, but for a few white children "to demand such separation would be absurd, and I hope that the convention will give its consent to no such proposition." This was the final word on the subject in the convention, and the vote gave an overwhelming majority for the mixed-school section.

Referring to this action of the convention in his message to the Legislature in July, Governor Orr, who was retiring from office,



said that the provision for mixed schools was a reckless and dangerous experiment and was not desired by the negroes or the whites, and if submitted to their decision the provision would have been completely repudiated by both. He noted also the causes for bickering and controversy already existing between the two people, and declared that "no greater cruelty could be inflicted by legislation upon the parents of the children of the two races, than that which is contemplated by this objectional feature of the constitution." Governor Scott, who succeeded Orr, shared the latter's opinion of the constitutional provision for mixed schools and likewise urged, in his message to the Legislature, the establishment of separate schools for the education of the children of the State. He believed the separation of the children in the public schools "a matter of the greatest importance to all classes of our people." Later he said:

It is the declared design of the constitution that all classes of our people shall be educated, but not to provide for this separation of the two races will be to repel the masses of the whites from the educational training that they so much need, and virtually to give our colored population the exclusive benefit of our public schools. Let us, therefore, recognize facts as they are and rely upon time and the elevating influences of popular education to dispel any unjust prejudices that may exist among the two races of our fellow citizens.

North Carolina's convention failed to incorporate in the constitution any provision either for or against mixed schools, although the subject was debated with much feeling. In the Legislature, however, numerous efforts were made by the radicals to open the race question. One member endeavored in vain to have inserted in the proposed school law a provision to prevent the teaching of the "doctrine of secession and of the lost cause"; another sought to prevent the teaching of "the sentiments embodied in that well-known song, 'John Brown's Soul is Marching Along'"; another desired a legal provision which would prevent any colored teacher from instructing in a white school; another

proposed a provision which looked to preventing white teachers from serving in negro schools ; and still another proposed "that no white Democrat should teach any colored girl." Finally, however, provision for separate schools was made in the school law of 1869.<sup>1</sup>

Separate schools were also provided for in Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Georgia, and in Alabama provision was made for the races to be kept separate "unless it be by the unanimous consent of the parents and guardians." The schools in that State did not suffer so much from foreign exploitation as did the schools in some States. Reconstruction in Georgia, which provided for separate schools, was also marked more or less for its moderation. The conservative white citizens were better represented in the administration of the State's affairs, and there were fewer reconstruction evils and less wanton corruption and extravagance in public office. The constitution left provision for the school system very largely to the Legislature, and the act to establish schools was initiated chiefly by the work of the state teachers' association and was therefore a conservative product.

There was no expressed provision for separate schools in the constitution of Mississippi, and the establishment of mixed schools was probably not contemplated in it, but by the law of July, 1870, the schools were opened to all the youth of school age in the State without distinction. No efforts seem to have

<sup>1</sup>A conservative by the name of Love from Jackson County and a radical by the name of Moore from Carteret County engaged in a heated discussion in the Senate during the final consideration of the educational bill. Love reminded the body that the gentleman from Carteret was not interested in the affairs of North Carolina and, besides, was a carpetbagger. Moore replied that the gentleman from Jackson was a liar. The gentleman from Jackson answered that the gentleman from Carteret was not just an ordinary liar, but a damned liar, and a final epithet was even more unbecoming a gentleman of senatorial rank. The encounter grew so fierce that the presiding officer rebuked the senators, and a committee was appointed to investigate their conduct. But the records do not show which one of the gentlemen was correct in his contention. See Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, pp. 233-234.

been made, however, to maintain mixed schools, and only a few were reported in existence in the State during this period. Under Louisiana's constitution all children of school age in that State were to be admitted to "the public schools or other institutions of learning sustained or established by the State in common, without distinction of race, color or previous condition," and the establishment of separate schools or institutions of learning exclusively for any race by the State was made illegal. This was perhaps the most radical step taken by any of the constitutional or legislative bodies of reconstruction, and opposition to it was widespread and violent. In effect mixed schools were made legal in Florida also.

The new constitutions varied somewhat in details, but in the main they were more or less similar. In general there was an expansion of educational provisions which were also more specific and more mandatory than were the ante-bellum constitutional provisions. The sources of school support were designated and provision was made for the reestablishment of the ante-bellum permanent public-school funds and for the administrative organization of education, or the Legislatures were required to make such provision. Provision was also made under the new constitutions for the education of the negro, for whom educational opportunity had not been provided before the war.

△ The provisions for uniform systems of taxation for school support were perhaps the most beneficial of all the constitutional requirements for education in the South during the reconstruction period. The State and local administrative organizations which the new constitutions provided for, however, in the main followed very closely and showed only slight advance over ante-bellum custom in the South.

The constitution of Virginia required the Legislature of that State to elect a superintendent of public instruction, who was to report for the consideration of that body "within thirty days after his election a plan for a uniform system of free public schools." There were numerous applicants for the superintendency, but

the Reverend W. H. Ruffner, who was ably supported by General Robert E. Lee and other prominent Virginians, was selected for the position, and he at once set to work on the task designated. A plan was presented, in the form of a bill, which was revised by Professor John B. Minor, a prominent teacher of law in the University of Virginia, and under the leadership of Colonel Edmund Pendleton in the Senate and of Major Henderson M. Bell in the House (both conservatives) it became law in July, 1870.

The law provided for State, county, and local supervision for schools, which were to be free to all children between the ages of five and twenty-one years and which were to continue for five months. Separate schools were provided for the colored children. Normal schools were also to have a place in the plan, and agricultural and graded schools were to be provided. The literary fund was reorganized and secured and, in addition to its income, provision was made for a capitation tax of one dollar and a property tax of ten cents on the hundred dollars' valuation, with optional county and district property taxation.

The excellences of this law, now celebrated in Virginia's educational history, and the dispatch with which it was prepared are interesting in the light of events of thirty years before. In Chapter VII it was noted that an educational convention was held in Lexington in 1841 and that its presiding officer, Dr. Henry Ruffner, presented a very remarkable plan for public education in Virginia. That plan called for a property tax for school support, a modern-school organization, and other principles of educational administration now universally accepted as sound. The plan which Ruffner presented to the Legislature of Virginia in 1870 and which was enacted into law at that time was strikingly similar to that presented by his father in 1841. It is not unlikely that the younger Ruffner had before him in 1870 the plan which the elder Ruffner urged thirty years earlier; certainly it is evident that the earlier plan influenced the later one. It should be kept in mind, therefore, that Virginia's post-bellum school system was planned by and enacted into law under the leadership of



native, conservative Virginians and that it was set on its way to success by a native, conservative Virginian who had unwavering faith in the power of state-supported and state-controlled public education, free and open alike to all classes.<sup>1</sup>

The new school law in North Carolina, which was almost entirely the product of the Senate, contained provisions for school support which were mandatory and less discretionary than the provisions of earlier acts. In most respects, however, it resembled ante-bellum legislation. Provision was made for a state board of education similar to the ante-bellum literary board, but with more specific powers, and for county and township school officers with duties very much like the duties of similar officers before 1860. The township trustees were to establish and maintain, for at least four months in every year, a number of schools at convenient points for the education of all children between the ages of six and twenty-one. They were also required to provide schoolhouses and equipment, employ and dismiss teachers, visit the schools, gather and report school statistics, and give attention to the details of local educational administration. Provision was made for a county examiner, whose duties were practically the same as those of the county educational officers of ante-bellum days. A course of study was prescribed to consist of reading, writing, spelling, geography, and English grammar and "such other studies as may be deemed necessary." Seventy-five per cent of the State and county capitation taxes was to be applied to public-school support, in addition to which a legislative appropriation was made to assist in maintaining the schools for four months. This latter source of school support, however, proved to be only a "paper" appropriation. With the exception of a definitely prescribed school term and provisions for a general school tax and for the education of the freedmen, the law of 1869 was practically a copy of the law of 1839 and its revisions.<sup>2</sup> It became the basis of Virginia's present school system.

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *Reconstruction and Education in Virginia*.

<sup>2</sup> Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, chap. xi.

The bill to establish a school system in South Carolina passed through the House and the Senate with no extraordinary debate and became law in February, 1870. For the first time in its history that State had adequate constitutional and legal provisions for public schools. A state board of education was created which took the place of the legislative committee on education of ante-bellum days; provision was made for a state superintendent, an office which did not exist in South Carolina before the war; and county school commissioners, county examiners, and local-district trustees were also provided for and their respective duties defined. The course of study was to consist of "orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, history of the United States and of this State, and good behavior." J. K. Jillson, of Massachusetts, who had previously been in the employ of the Freedmen's Bureau, became the first superintendent under the new régime.

The new school law of Arkansas was enacted in July, 1868. It provided for a state superintendent to be elected by the people every four years, at an annual salary of \$3500, and a circuit superintendent for each judicial district of the State was to be appointed by the governor at an annual salary of \$3000. These circuit officers were to report annually to the state superintendent, to have supervision of all school matters in their respective districts, and, with the state superintendent, to form a state board of education. The counties were divided into local districts, each of which was entitled to one trustee to be elected by popular vote in the district and to receive two dollars for each day actually employed by him in the discharge of his duties, provided, however, that he should not receive remuneration for more than ten days' services annually. The interest on the permanent school fund (which was reorganized), a general property tax which had begun under the presidential plan of reconstruction, a uniform capitation tax, and an optional local tax constituted the principal sources of school support. Provision was also made for teachers' institutes. Teachers had to take oath to support

honestly and faithfully the constitution and the laws of the State and to encourage all other persons to do so, never to countenance or aid in the secession of the State from the United States, to inculcate in the children sentiments of patriotism, and to perform faithfully and impartially all the duties of their office. The following year an act was passed by which special school districts could be created in towns and cities, and under this legislation urban systems were organized in several communities.

—The school law enacted by the first reconstruction Legislature of Alabama differed but little from earlier legislation in that State. The constitution had placed all public educational interests under the control of a state board, which was given rather large legislative powers. The acts of this board, when approved by the governor—who was ex-officio a member of it—or when reenacted by a two-thirds vote in case of executive disapproval, were to have full legislative force unless repealed by the Legislature. This board named the county superintendents, who, in turn, selected trustees for the local schools and ordered the establishment of public schools throughout the State for the free instruction of all children between the ages of five and twenty-one. The school system proved top-heavy from the outset. Large powers given the central board proved unpopular, and the numerous administrative officers from design or otherwise absorbed large parts of the school funds before they reached the schools. Many teachers in practically every county often failed to receive payment for their services, and as early as 1870 the school affairs of the State were condemned as “shameful and reprehensible.”

Florida's new constitution and the school law of January, 1869, made rather excellent provisions for schools in that State. The various sources of the permanent school fund in existence before the war were redesignated, and provision was made for the application of the income to public-school support. A state school tax of not less than one mill on the dollar was to be levied, and each county was required to raise by taxation not less than half the amount which it received from the general school fund.

Provision was made for a state superintendent, for county superintendents, and for local trustees. The school law embodied some of the best features of earlier educational legislation, but with certain adaptations which were not always happy and wholesome. The schools were to be open and free to all children between the ages of six and twenty-one.

The new school law of Georgia, approved in October, 1870, like the law of Virginia and of Tennessee, was a conservative product. It was largely the work of a committee from the state teachers' association, a representative group which had met in Atlanta in August, 1869. A state board of education was created, to be composed of certain state officers, and provision was made for a state superintendent, for county and district supervision, and for more or less adequate school support. The schools were to be free to all children, but separate schools were required for negroes. The creditable educational efforts made in Georgia before congressional reconstruction began helped very largely to put the machinery of the new system in readiness by the close of 1870, but it was not until 1872, when the conservatives got practically complete control of the state government, that order was restored and the public schools were put in general operation. Until that time the available school funds were so generally squandered that but few schools were maintained and with only a few teachers. Afterward, however, conditions improved and the schools slowly came to occupy their rightful position in the State.

The new school law of Louisiana was approved in March, 1869, in conformity to the new constitutional provisions. A state board of education was created, to consist of the state superintendent, one member from each congressional district in the State, and two members from the State at large, and under this board the management and control of public schools were placed. The State was divided into six districts, which corresponded to the congressional districts, and a superintendent was



to be appointed for each such division. The state board was empowered to appoint local school directors to manage and control local schools, subject to the direction of the district superintendents. A general property tax of two mills on the dollar was levied for school purposes, and permission was given local communities to vote additional taxes when necessary, provided, however, that such taxes should not exceed five mills on the dollar. Separate schools were prohibited, and all children between the ages of six and twenty-one years were to be educated without distinction. The large centralization of authority in the state board (which took from the people the power of determining how the local schools should be controlled), insufficient resources for school support, and indifference and often bitter opposition aroused by the mixed-school requirement greatly impaired the success of the school system in this State during the early years of reconstruction.

The new law of Mississippi, enacted in July, 1870, embodied the provisions required by the constitution of the previous year. Provision was made for a state board of education, a state superintendent, county superintendents, and local trustees; a four months' school term was required and provision was made for rather liberal school support. The state board was given control over the school lands and school funds and the power of appointing the county superintendents. Teachers' institutes were to be held under the direction of the state superintendent, who was also required to visit annually the schools of each congressional district. Powers of supervising the local schools and of examining and licensing teachers were given the county superintendents. Under the law the schools were to be free and open to all children from five to twenty-one years of age without distinction. This feature of the system met with violent opposition and often produced disastrous results.

Texas emerged from the war with its resources severely crippled and its educational enterprises generally demoralized. As noted

above, however, its constitutional and legal provisions under the presidential plan of restoration undertook to restore as normal educational conditions as the stress of the times would allow. The reorganization of that period provided for the legislative support of schools and contemplated school facilities for the negroes and an adequate administrative organization. The constitution of 1869 did not materially change the earlier provisions except in providing for the election of the state superintendent, after the first term of office, by popular vote instead of by appointment by the governor. The law of August 13, 1870, directed that schools should be maintained four months in each year, provided for county and local officers, for the examination and certification of teachers, for a form of compulsory attendance of children between the ages of six and sixteen years, and allowed private teachers to participate in the benefits of the school fund in districts where no public schools were set up, provided, however, that such teachers were examined and certificated by the county examiners. For public-school support there was to be set aside one fourth of the state revenue from taxation, as well as the annual capitation tax of one dollar and the income from the permanent school fund.

Tennessee was readmitted to the Union in July, 1866, and thus escaped congressional reconstruction, but a division of sentiment prevented a continuous domestic peace during that régime. But the new school law enacted in March, 1867, largely the work of the state teachers' association, made provisions for state, county, and district organization and supervision, for a state board of commissioners to care for the school fund, and for additional school support by capitation, property, and other taxes. The county superintendents were to examine and certificate teachers and perform other duties usually required of such officers. The schools were to continue five months each year by general support, and longer by permissive local taxation.

In general the earlier school laws enacted under the new constitutions were more specific and less discretionary in character than

ante-bellum educational legislation had been. Provision was made for uniform methods of school support by property or capitation taxation or both and by optional local taxation for definitely prescribed school terms, for state and local taxation and administrative organization, for courses of study, for reorganizing the ante-bellum school endowments or literary funds, and for the examination and certification of teachers. Many of these provisions were theoretical and nominal, however, and the legislation contained other defects and weaknesses which served for many years to delay rather than to promote public education in some of the States. But legislation enacted largely under conservative influence—as was the case in Virginia and a few other States—was usually more nearly in accord with the needs and the temper of the times and was therefore more successful in operation.

Legislative enactments alone were not sufficient, however, for the building of a good school system. Education, which was now confronted by new and peculiar obstacles, needed more than laws and constitutional requirements for its promotion and expansion. There was everywhere in the South at this time a sense of uncertainty and insecurity which was produced by the changed political conditions, distressing poverty, and the inexperience, prejudice, and ignorance of those in control of affairs. The theory was gaining that public education was to be universal, but it was difficult to make that a guiding principle in practice. The new status of the negro, who had suddenly been given a prominent political place without any preparation for it, and the constant dread of mixed schools proved to be practical obstacles in the way of public educational improvement. These and other conditions made difficult the successful work of the schools during reconstruction and even for several years following the close of that period. We now turn to a study of the operation of the schools during that time.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Why was public education such a discouraging problem to the people of the South after 1865?

2. How did the presidential plan of reconstruction differ from the congressional plan? What effect did the political changes of those years have on public education in your State?

3. Study the legislation and the press of your State for the reflection of attitude toward public education between 1865 and 1868.

4. What was the attitude of Southern leaders toward the education of the freedmen during those years? Give evidence that your State would have made provision for their education if the presidential plan of reconstruction had been successful.

5. Compare the educational provisions of legislation during congressional reconstruction with those of the ante-bellum period in your State for (a) school support, (b) organization and administration of schools, (c) supervision of schools, (d) training of teachers, (e) examination and certification of teachers, (f) curriculum and textbooks.

6. Why was the question of mixed schools so generally agitated in the constitutional conventions and legislative bodies of reconstruction?

7. Show how public education was promoted in your State during the period of congressional reconstruction. In what ways was it retarded?

8. Show how it was natural that during the years immediately following the close of the war inaccurate statements should have been made concerning the extent of education in the South before 1860.

9. Why was the South looked upon as a promising field for missionary and educational effort after the war? What effect did that attitude have on public education in those States then and later?

10. List the actual educational benefits which the period of reconstruction made in your State. What would have been the result if the white leadership of your State had been free to act without any outside interference during that period? Give reasons for your opinion.

11. Should the Federal government have aided the reorganization and development of public education in the South after the Civil War? Give reasons for your answer.



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## CHAPTER X

### EDUCATION DURING RECONSTRUCTION

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. Constitutional and legal provisions proved to be insufficient for the adequate promotion of public education, and throughout reconstruction and for many years afterward the schools were forced to struggle for their existence.

2. Financial difficulties, diversion of school funds, and the agitation of the Civil Rights Bill were among the obstacles encountered by public education in Virginia.

3. The schools in Georgia were also afflicted by the social disorder and upheaval of the period; the requirement for mixed schools and certain other difficulties prevented educational progress in Louisiana.

4. Bitterness and violence, fraud and mismanagement, reached the schools in Florida and crippled their usefulness. Public education was demoralized in Mississippi by similar causes.

5. The schools "literally died of starvation" in Arkansas; political and social disorder and the misapplication of school funds rendered the school system "a nullity and a sham" in Tennessee, and similar conditions prevailed in Texas, with like results.

6. Lack of funds, defective legislation, partisan strife, fraud and extravagance, brought failure to the schools in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Alabama. But here, as in all the States, there was slight promise of improvement after 1876.

7. In reaction to the régime of riot and misgovernment from 1868 to 1876 partisan political feelings continued to run high for several years following the undoing of reconstruction. Again the schools were subordinated to less worthy interests as a result of ills which had their beginnings in reconstruction.

It was noted in the preceding chapter that during the early years of congressional reconstruction the legal provisions for schools in the South were improved. This reform appeared, however, not only in the Southern States. In other sections of the

country during the same time constitutional provisions for schools were revised, school legislation was improved, and provisions for better educational facilities were generally made. The educational changes of the period were not confined to any section.

But public education in the South required for its adequate promotion more than constitutional and legislative provisions for financial support and administrative direction. Important as such provisions were, they were insufficient for the peculiar conditions of the time. Confidence needed to be restored, the principle of public education for the children of all classes and of both races needed to be firmly established in the public mind, and the men and women of the South needed to have their faces turned toward the future. Here is the point at which educational reconstruction in the South failed; and in this failure appeared the chief cause of complaint against the activities of the time and the chief explanation of the educational lethargy in the South for a quarter of a century afterwards.

Throughout those subsequent years the iniquities of reconstruction were keenly felt in education, and the public schools literally struggled for their existence. Defective legislation, defective organization which wore for many years the color of partisan politics, and the deadening of public interest through the unwarranted agitation of the new position of the negro were among the unwholesome and peculiar conditions which retarded the growth of public education. These obstacles appeared early, and some of them have not yet been removed. Their harmful influence in the various Southern States will appear in this brief treatment of the operation of the schools during and for several years following reconstruction.

It was noted in the preceding chapter that the school system set up in Virginia during reconstruction was largely the work of the conservative element of that State, even though membership in the constitutional convention and in the early Legislature was largely radical. That plan, however, met with many obstacles. Strong sentiment favoring church schools, apparent hostility of



the well-to-do toward public schools, the poor economic condition of the State, and the element of charity which the poorer classes saw in a public-school system all served as difficulties to confront Superintendent Ruffner. But he began his work at once. County superintendents and local trustees were appointed and were given instructions by means of letters, circulars, and through the columns of the *Educational Journal*, a magazine established in 1869 as the organ of the Virginia Educational Association. Schools were organized, the school census taken, teachers were examined and commissioned, and by 1871 the administrative part of the school machinery was in large measure ready for operation. But as late as January, 1871, all the public-school money was not available, and in fully half the counties of the State schools were forced to open by means of private subscription. Not a few of the schools thus supported previously existed as private schools. They were now adopted as public schools, though the teachers continued to receive remuneration from their patrons as well as from public funds. This combination of private and public funds proved a very popular means of school support.

The sudden demand for teachers made the problems of their supply very difficult. But Ruffner believed that the reverses which had come to so many of "our most cultivated people were incidentally converted into blessings to the children of the State by furnishing a large number of accomplished teachers." The qualifications of most of the teachers were not always what could have been desired, because many communities were unable to pay salaries sufficient to secure the best talent available. It was very difficult to secure teachers for the negro schools, but there seems to have been no disposition to discriminate against the education of the negro, even though a radical, political, and social change had suddenly taken place. In many places the white people, who had greater means, often voluntarily contributed enough to open a "proportionate number of schools for the colored."

The increase in schools, teachers, and enrollment during the first two years of the new system was encouraging to the

superintendent. "Considering the embarrassments under which the mighty work of universal education was begun and has been continued," he said, "we have reason to thank God and take courage." But attendance decreased during the third year, on account of bad roads, bad weather, contagious and epidemic diseases, poverty, and the unwillingness of parents to continue to send their children to teachers who were found to be incompetent. "Whenever school officers committed the error of unduly multiplying schools, thus rendering it necessary to employ 'cheap' teachers," said Ruffner, "there is no reason to go beyond this fact in search of a reason for a decline in numbers." At the same time he declared that the more promptly the people would manifest their disapprobation of poor schools and poor teachers, "the sooner can we bring our school system up to a high degree of efficiency." This principle, which is as sound now as it was then, the South has never yet fully adopted. And only by its complete acceptance can the schools in that region achieve their full purposes.

Lack of facilities for teacher-training was another weakness of the school system. The constitution required the Legislature to establish normal schools "as soon as practicable," but this mandate was not being observed. There were two normal schools for negroes, one at Richmond and one at Hampton, both largely supported by contributions from the North and supplied with well-trained teachers who were instructing more than three hundred pupils. But no provision had yet been made for the white teachers of the State, few if any of whom had received any professional training. Ruffner greatly deplored this neglect and pointed out that the schools were filled with "raw apprentices, who must of necessity do a great deal of bad work. How long is this wretched economy to continue? How long are the children of the State to be denied the advantages of really good teaching? Why use the last dollar to multiply schools when we are already wasting money on hundreds of schools that are worth nothing? When shall the idea be fastened in the public that it is not schools we are after, but education? We are in the fifth year of the school

system, and yet not a dollar of public funds has been spent on teachers. The constitution requires that normal schools shall be established *as soon as practicable*. It has been practicable to do *something* in this direction from the beginning. We have been working with dull tools in order to save the cost of a grindstone!"

He repeatedly urged the establishment of at least one normal school and urged provision by which counties could expend \$100 or \$200 a year to secure competent instructors for their teachers in institutes, but nothing had yet come of the recommendation. Bills on the subject were occasionally introduced in the Legislature, but lack of effective public sentiment resulted in their failure of passage. This neglect of providing for the training of teachers was widely felt. "The number of applicants now is too small, and the grade of their qualification too low, to excite wholesome emulation," said one county official; and another declared that the supply of teachers was very largely confined to that class who adopted teaching to "eke out a support."

Another obstacle to public education appeared in the reaction which was largely produced by a diversion of the school funds between 1870 and 1876. In his sixth annual report Ruffner referred to the tardiness with which the funds were paid over to the schools. For more than a year he was active in his efforts to secure legislative attention to this condition, to have the funds restored, and to make impossible the continuance or future recurrence of such diversion of money so sacredly dedicated by both constitution and law to purposes of public education.

The difficulty was of a complicated nature and revealed the defects of reconstruction legislation. The constitution had imposed on the Legislature the duty of applying the capitation and certain property taxes to school support; the Legislature obeyed the constitution on this point, fixed the capitation tax at one dollar, and imposed a property tax of one mill on the dollar. By an act of March 30, 1871, known as the funding bill, which provided for funding and paying the public debt, holders of state bonds could exchange them for new bonds whose coupons were to be

"receivable for all taxes, dues, debts and demands due the State." By act of March 7, 1872, which was neither approved nor vetoed by the governor, the act of March 30, 1871, was repealed; the coupons were no longer to be receivable for taxes, but taxes were to be paid in gold or silver coin, United States treasury notes, or notes of the national banks of the United States, and officers were forbidden to receive anything else for them. Thus, by the constitution and law of the State a certain amount of revenue at a fixed rate was to be raised and applied to education. By subsequent legislation such revenue could, to the extent of the coupons issuable, be paid in tax-receivable coupons. A later act made it necessary to pay taxes in money.

Suit was soon instituted to compel officers in Richmond to receive coupons for taxes, and the circuit court issued a mandamus requiring a sheriff to receive the coupons, thus recognizing the act of March 30, 1871. The case was appealed and the decision given in December, 1872. The court held that the act of March 30, 1871, constituted a contract on the part of the State which subsequent legislation could not impair; that the act of March 7, 1872, was unconstitutional in that a State could not make laws impairing the obligation of contracts; and that the act of March 30, 1871, was not in conflict with the constitution of the State, which dedicated certain revenue to public-school purposes.

On this last point the court held that the interest on the bonds of the State could be paid in the manner prescribed and the provisions for schools still be respected, and suggested an increase in taxation if the existing rate proved insufficient. "The obligation to provide for the interest due by the coupons is as high as the duty of applying the capitation tax and other funds to the schools. Both duties are alike obligatory, and both may be discharged as there is no conflict between them." It was only by a failure to discharge the one that the performance of the other could be put in jeopardy; and the Legislature, by faithfully and



fearlessly meeting both obligations, was expected to preserve the "plighted faith of the State and protect her constitution from violation."

Later, when motion was referred for a rehearing of the case, a member of the court took occasion to say that if it were impracticable to raise sufficient revenue for both the state debt and the schools, the latter did not "impose an obligation on the Legislature paramount to the obligation to provide for the payment of the interest on the public debt. That was an obligation antecedent and paramount to the constitution itself, and could not be repudiated by the constitution, if it had so provided . . . and, furthermore, this being an obligation of *debt*, and not eleemosynary in its character, as are the other provisions referred to, however desirable and important it may be that they should be carried out, I hesitate not to say, this is of *higher* obligation. A man must be just before he can be generous."

The dissenting member of the court held that the constitutional provision for school support had been violated and that the Legislature had no right to apply to the state debt "a fund sacredly dedicated to the cause of education." He cited supreme-court decisions of Iowa and California to support his opinion "that whenever the Legislature raises a fund, by taxation or otherwise, for the support of common schools, it cannot, by any contemporaneous or subsequent legislation, divert the fund to a different purpose"; and that school revenue, when collected, by force of the constitution became inviolably appropriated to school purposes. The practical operation of the funding bill, in his opinion, defeated the object of the constitution in regard to schools.

Another case further illustrated the actual situation. James Clarke was fined \$30 in the Hustings Court of Richmond and in payment of the fine offered a \$30 coupon, which the court refused. On failure to pay in money Clarke was placed in jail. Application for a writ of habeas corpus was made to the supreme court, and the prisoner was discharged. The case brought up the

question of the payment in coupons of fines which were expressly set apart for educational purposes. The decision of the court was based on the principle, given in the case described above, that the act of March 30, 1871, was constitutional. The court held that the school funds were sacred and the duty to education was paramount, but however sacred and high, such an obligation should not be met at the sacrifice of other obligations. "The people must be educated, but they must not be educated at the price of repudiation and dishonor. Better would be ignorance than enlightenment purchased at such a fearful price." The dissenting justice argued as before. He saw no difference between a law which applied fines directly to the payment of interest on the public debt and one which gave authority for the payment of such fines in coupons; he held that the Legislature could not divert a fund from its constitutional purpose and justify its conduct by depending on some future Legislature to provide the deficiency by taxation. "It is the duty of the Legislature, by taxation, to pay the public debt. If it fails to do so, it cannot justify its action by giving to the creditor a fund not under its control."

It will be seen that from the outset there would be considerable difficulty in paying to schools the funds they were entitled to receive. When the taxes were to be paid partly in coupons, how could the schools receive money? Moreover, there was no authority to reissue the coupons, but they were ordered canceled; and the system of bookkeeping in use made it difficult to show the proportionate share of revenue belonging to schools. The revenue came into the treasury in money and coupons in the proportion of nearly half and half. Probably more than \$250,000 of school funds was annually absorbed by the coupons. The school funds were not paid into the treasury separately, but in common with other revenue; but all expenditures were made only on the warrant of the auditor, and the schools got what was left after warrants had been drawn for other governmental expenses. The auditor in his annual report stated the amount of money he had turned over to the schools without stating how much had

actually been received for education. By an act of March, 1873, he was ordered to pay in cash all money for school purposes. But fiscal complications were even then not avoided and the difficulty was not removed, because the amount paid in coupons was such a large part of the total revenues that the actual cash received was not sufficient to pay the schools their share except at the expense of other interests equally as sacred perhaps as education.

The diversion of funds did not become generally known until January, 1876. Superintendent Ruffner constantly sought official statement of the actual amount diverted and endeavored to have a bill enacted which would give him authority to obtain this information, but the bill died in the hands of the committee. The vitality of the school system was therefore put in the greatest jeopardy. A later report and demand of the superintendent led directly to senate inquiries.

Different official statements disagreed as to the actual amounts due the schools. The superintendent believed that \$1,113,000 at least had been diverted. Delinquent revenues due by defaulting officers were said to be numerous, some of which had to be collected by suits and were therefore naturally subject to all delays incident to litigation. Some were lost by the insolvency of the officers, and still others were abated or compromised by special acts of the Legislature. Much of the actual revenue came after considerable delay, irregularly and in very small sums. Moreover, a large amount had been lost to the schools by an injunction of a Federal court which suspended a certain law on liquor taxation. The amount due schools was thus gradually increasing. More than \$1,000,000 was due from the assessed revenue for schools, about \$78,000 was due from certain corporation taxes, more than \$380,000 was due on arrears of interest on the literary fund, and \$40,000 was due on fines, making a total of about \$1,500,000 due and unpaid to the schools of the State during the first eight years of the new system.

A large curtailment in the operation of the schools was the result, and the effect was very damaging. Reports from many of

the counties showed considerable dissatisfaction and discontent with the system, and the opponents of public education industriously made use of the diversion of funds to awaken complaints among those who were ignorant of the operation of the schools and impatient for their perfection. When the dark days came in 1878 and 1879, schools were temporarily suspended in many places, and in others the term was considerably decreased. Teachers were not paid, or their warrants went begging for buyers at large discounts. There was general relaxation of educational effort. Nearly 100,000 children were kept from school; in Richmond alone 1000 children were unable to enter. The mischief of the condition was brought home to the people generally and with a keenness which excited extensive discontent and which showed itself in various legislative petitions from 1876 to 1879.

It should be kept in mind that no censure for these conditions attached to the state officers. The root of the unfortunate matter was in the defective legislation of the early years of reconstruction and the defects of the accounting system of the State. The funding bill was probably passed precipitately in consequence of certain exaggerated estimates of the resources of the State. Moreover, it was generally believed that the bill was passed by "unwarrantable means" and in direct violation of the will of the people. Whether the framers of the law were consciously and deliberately guilty of fraud is difficult to determine, but it seems certain that they there planted some seeds of repudiation from which they may have had faint hope later to reap bountifully.

As early as 1876 it was evident that the force of the will of the people was at work. The men and party that had failed in their opportunity to foster education "were tried and condemned at the bar of public opinion, and removed from power by the verdict of the people. . . ." This popular sentiment was manifested the following year, when a Legislature was elected pledged to restore to the schools the funds which had been used for other purposes. The result of the election also showed that the people were ready to indorse the other principle involved, "that in the settlement



of the public debt there must be no compromise of the honor of the State—no outrage upon the rights of the public creditor.”

The Legislature, which was largely conservative, immediately took steps to ascertain the causes of the deficiency in the school funds and how the money could be restored, and by joint resolution the auditor was directed to pay to the literary fund the amounts due the public schools. A similar resolution had been introduced in the session of 1876-1877, but no effectual relief was secured until the act of March 14, 1878, which required the auditor to return the arrearages due the school fund in \$15,000 quarterly installments, beginning July 1, 1878, and to continue without “further order, demand, or requisition, until full payment shall have been made of all arrearages due from the capitation and property taxes set apart by mandate of the constitution and law of the state for the support of the public free school system. . . .” By subsequent legislation these quarterly installments were increased to \$25,000. At the same session legislation commonly known as the “Barbour Bill” was passed, prescribing the manner in which school funds should be collected and requiring them to be paid to the literary fund and used only for education. By this act certain percentages of the taxes were to be collected in money and twenty-five cents on the hundred dollars were to go to support the government, ten cents to support schools, and fifteen cents to pay the interest on the public debt, the right to use coupons within the limit of these percentages being distinctly stated. Governor Holliday vetoed the bill March 1, 1878, and the veto was later sustained by the Legislature.

The governor gave reasons for vetoing the measure: “Instead of bringing peace, it is challenging war between the State and its creditors, and keeping alive in bitterness a thing which has already, by its agitation, cost more than its whole sum to the material interests and welfare of the commonwealth.” The matter should no longer be kept in controversy. In the second place the governor denied “that the legislature is bound to support the free-school system at the expense of the State’s creditors . . .

public free schools are not a necessity. The world, for hundreds of years, grew in wealth, culture, and refinement, without them. They are a luxury, adding, when skillfully conducted, it may be, to the beauty and power of a State, but to be paid for, like any other luxury by the people who wish their benefits." He pronounced the bill "a proclamation of war against those to whom we are in debt."

His argument was not unlike that used by other officials who jealously guarded the State's credit. So eager were some of them to save the credit of the State that their reasoning could easily be interpreted as displaying an attitude somewhat hostile to education, though such was hardly the case. The auditor believed that all claims which were authorized and directed to be paid were equally entitled to their proportionate share of the currency, and he saw no reason why the schools should be an exception to this principle. In December, 1877, Governor Kemper said in his message to the Legislature:

In an issue of life and death between the State and the school system, is it to be said that the State must perish and the schools survive? Does the bond of the constitution so nominate and exalt any one of the departments over all others, that it may, whenever the letter of the bond is forfeit, cut its pound of flesh from the body of the State, nearest its heart, even at the sacrifice of the life of the State? . . .

The school system is the creation of the organic law. The constitutional obligation to maintain it is not questioned. In all my official relations to that system, I have endeavored to support it fairly, efficiently and in the spirit of its founders. But if it is to override all other interests however momentous or sacred; if the claims of the school department upon the funds of the general treasury constitute a lien paramount to every other; if the existence of the government, in an emergency, is to be dependent upon the leniency of that department; then, the sooner it is shorn of its dangerous supremacy the better.

By act of March 3, 1879, known as the "Henkel Bill," provision was made to secure to the schools the money set apart by the constitution and laws for that purpose, and the auditor was

required to calculate the total revenue applicable to public schools and to report his estimate to the state superintendent as a basis for distribution. By this law 75 per cent of the estimated money for schools was to be left in the counties. Later the act was so amended as to leave in the counties 90 per cent of the estimated revenue applicable to schools.

Subsequent legislation was even more just and liberal to the cause of public education. By acts of February and April, 1882, the sum of \$400,000, in four equal annual installments, was to be appropriated to the further credit on arrearages due the schools. This was part of the \$500,000 received on account of the sale of the State's interest in the Atlantic, Mississippi, and Ohio Railway. The act making the appropriation declared that "whereas out of the revenues assessed for the years" 1870 to 1879 a sum amounting to more than \$1,504,000 and dedicated by the constitution to public education "was diverted to other purposes" prior to 1880, "the general assembly conceives it to be its paramount duty" to restore said school fund as speedily as possible. The remaining \$100,000 of the proceeds of the sale was to be spent in the erection and maintenance of a normal school for colored teachers.

It was believed by some that this \$500,000 belonged to the sinking fund and should be placed there, and suit was accordingly instituted to prohibit the board of education from applying the money as the Legislature had ordered. In June, 1882, an injunction was granted restraining the board from carrying out the provisions of the act. Appeal was taken to the supreme court in December of that year, and the injunction was dissolved and the money restored to the schools. The plaintiff sought the United States Supreme Court for an appeal and *supersedeas*, which was not granted, and the money was ordered paid to the board of education, January, 1883.<sup>1</sup>

From now on conditions changed. The financial management of the schools showed decided improvement after 1878, made

<sup>1</sup> Knight, Reconstruction and Education in Virginia.

possible by relief afforded by the legislation described above. The money which had been diverted was gradually repaid. In March, 1884, in response to an inquiry of the senate finance committee, the auditor furnished a statement of the amounts due the schools saying that the arrearages account would soon be settled in full.

Another slight shadow was temporarily thrown across the path of public education in the State near the close of reconstruction by a newspaper controversy which also had damaging effect. The principal participants were the superintendent of public instruction and Dr. R. L. Dabney, minister, and professor in Hampden-Sidney College, a man who represented the educational philosophy of aristocratic, ante-bellum Virginia, but hardly the prevailing educational theory of post-bellum days. The controversy consisted of a series of letters published in the newspapers of Richmond. "Your 'free' schools," wrote Dr. Dabney, addressing the superintendent, "like not a few of the other pretensions of radicalism, are in fact exactly opposite to the name falsely assumed. The great bulk of those who pay the money for them do it, not 'freely,' but by compulsion. It [the school system] has become mischievous and tyrannical, in that it forces on us the useless, impractical, mischievous, and dishonest attempt to teach literary arts to all negroes, when the State is unable to pay its debts and provide for its welfare. . . ." He advocated universal education provided it was true education, by which he meant education on the "old Virginia plan." He argued that the principle by which "the State intrudes into the parental obligation and function of educating all children is dangerous and agrarian," and the theory that the children belong to the State he pronounced pagan, "derived from heathen Sparta and Plato's heathen Republic. . . ." Moreover, he held that crime and poverty increased in proportion to the amount of scholastic instruction given. Besides, there was a natural humiliation in accepting the charity of the State. He believed that ignorance and its consequences must needs be hereditary, and that knowledge, culture, and virtue are not to be extended beyond the fortunate youth for



whom their parents secure them. The rigor of this law might be somewhat relaxed, but not by the civil magistrate or the State. "The agency must be social and Christian."

Ruffner's replies to Dabney were friendly, though the urgency of championing the cause of popular education was sufficient excuse for firmness and keenness of statement:

I must be allowed to say that you do not represent Virginia either present or past: not even colonial Virginia: still less the Virginia of Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe: nor of the elder John Tyler, James Barbour and W. C. Nicholas: nor of James P. Preston, Thomas M. Randolph and William B. Giles: nor of John Floyd, David Campbell and James McDowell: nor the Virginia of today; and I shall prove it.

Here as elsewhere during his labors for public education Ruffner sought to make clear the principle of universal education, free and open to all the youth of the State; and now as at other times his arguments were convincing and effective. In the end the controversy may have had the effect of slightly stimulating the feeble-hearted, though in a few instances there is evidence that Dr. Dabney's arguments caused some discontent with the system.<sup>1</sup>

Similar financial and administrative difficulties appeared in practically every other Southern State after 1868 as a result of defective legislation of the reconstruction period. Conflicts between provisions of the constitutions and of the laws gave considerable trouble generally. Other weaknesses and defects of reconstruction legislation appeared in matters of administration, local direction and support, and from many of these ills the South has not yet recovered. Some of the troubles inherited from this period will be pointed out in a later chapter.

The case of Virginia will also serve to illustrate another obstacle which stood in the way of public educational advancement. This appeared in the agitation in Congress of the Civil Rights Bill, which looked to securing to the freedmen rights identical with

<sup>1</sup>Knight, Reconstruction and Education in Virginia.

whites in hotels, public conveyances, schools, churches, and theaters. Its baneful influence was widely felt in every part of the South, especially during the years 1873 and 1874 and even afterwards. Opposition to the proposed measure was widespread not only among the conservative white people but among the negroes themselves, whose interests could not have been promoted by it.

The measure passed the Senate in May, 1874, and had considerable support in the House of Representatives, but not enough to prevent its defeat. The effect of the agitation and the fear of future attempts to enact the measure served to damage educational effort and interest. Contracts for building schoolhouses were canceled, engagements with teachers were suspended, school officials resigned, and state legislation which looked to an improvement of schools was delayed on account of the bill. The actual effect of the proposed measure on public education in the South generally may be seen from certain reports of counties in Virginia :

*Brunswick* : There is still some opposition to our school system, but that would die out if the agitation of the civil rights question could be hushed up.

*Campbell* : The impending civil rights bill has somewhat checked progress.

*Franklin* : . . . But should the civil rights bill, or any bill providing for mixed schools, be passed by congress, the white people of the county will, with one voice, say "Away, away with the public school system."

*Green and Madison* : Our people build school-houses and are very much inclined to improve in that direction; but the civil rights bill looms up before them and frightens them from their prosperity.

*Henrico* : There is still a deep-seated prejudice with some against the system, and this can never be removed while the abominable "civil rights" agitation is an open question.

*King William* : While the matter was before congress a prejudice was excited in this county which "would have destroyed the whole system, had the measure passed and an effort been made to enforce it. Apart from the fear of federal intervention, the people very generally advocate a system of public education, and are looking to the time

when Virginia will be left to manage her own affairs, to form a system of public education for the benefit of all her citizens. . . . The white people in the county were willing in all cases to accord to the colored equal advantages of the school system and perfect equality before the law.

*Lancaster and Northumberland*: Public sentiment in some degree has varied during the scholastic year, owing to the vexed and unsettled question of civil rights. Since the failure to pass that bill through congress the sentiment of the community has become more calm, and a large majority of our cleverest and best population will sustain and uphold the free school system.

*Loudoun*: Here the people were willing and eager to "contribute to the building of houses and to employ the public teachers by applying private funds in extending the session at the expiration of the public school terms. They were beginning to unite heartily with us in our labors, and our work would have progressed satisfactorily if the prospect of the disastrous consequences of the enforcement of the civil rights bill had not warned them against further action. In several instances promised assistance was withdrawn and our friends have relaxed their efforts in dread of the threatened suspension or destruction of our schools by congressional interference."

*Mecklenburg*: Some of the districts in this county had building funds in hand, but refused to do anything while the matter was being agitated in congress. In some townships work on school-houses was actually suspended for this reason.

*Rockbridge*: Public sentiment seems to have retrograded in Rockbridge in regard to the school system, during the past year; no doubt owing to the civil rights movement in congress. The people see very plainly how they may soon be forced to abandon the system of public schools entirely, or submit to its being made a means of social degradation and political oppression. Hence they are inclined to look with more or less suspicion on what seems to be fraught with so much danger.

*Southampton and Surry*: Operations to build and equip school-houses were resumed as soon as it appeared that the bill would be defeated in congress.

Ruffner believed that if the bill had been enacted "our school system would have received its deathblow in two hours after the fact became known to the Legislature. Many building and other enterprises instantly halted, subdued opposition revived, and,

strange to say, some schools suddenly lost most of their pupils. The growing feeling of cordiality toward the education of the colored people was chilled."

Georgia suffered less from the social disorder and upheaval of the period during the actual process of reconstruction than some of the other Southern States, but the general condition of the times was even there not conducive to educational enthusiasm. Moreover, certain evils of the years 1868 to 1872, when the conservatives regained final control of the State, lived on in their influence for many years and in many ways retarded a wholesome educational growth.

The machinery provided for the school system under the law of 1870 was made ready immediately thereafter, although very little was accomplished until nearly three years later, when the conservatives "brought some order out of the chaotic treasury" and set the public schools in general operation throughout the State. The original law under the reconstruction régime soon revealed many defects. Among these was the difficulty experienced in selecting suitable supervisory and administrative officers for the local organization. Good men were occasionally found for the position of county boards of education and county school commissioners, but those who were opposed to the system or who took no interest in it generally resigned or declined to serve when appointed. But it was frequently impossible to obtain a quorum at the meetings of the county board, and at meetings with full attendance it was very difficult to secure the definite action that was necessary. There appeared a lack of confidence in the permanency of the system, and discouragement arose as a result of meager school revenues. Between 1868 and 1872 most of the public-school funds were diverted to other purposes, with the result that the public schools were suspended in 1872.

With the return of home rule in 1872 Gustavus J. Orr became state superintendent of schools, a position which he continued to occupy with remarkable success until his death, in 1887. In his first report Orr spoke of "the utter lack of school funds"



and certain defects of the school law of 1870 which "have prevented the inauguration of schools very generally throughout the entire State." He urged legislative change of the school plan and patience to give the schools a fair trial. He also recommended that the Legislature provide for restoring the school funds which had been diverted under radical rule. This recommendation, as well as that for an improved school law, was acted on favorably, and the diverted school funds were restored under authority of an act of August, 1872, and subsequent legislation.<sup>1</sup> Thus the conservatives in Georgia, as in Virginia, returned to the schools the funds diverted from their legitimate object by the reconstructionists.

Gradually the schools began to recover and to establish themselves, though progress during the next few years was slow. In 1873 the school population was 343,000, with only 76,000 enrolled and only 32,000 in average attendance. The school term was sixty-six days. The following year 121,000 were enrolled and 76,000 were in average daily attendance. In 1875 the enrollment and average attendance were slightly larger than in 1874, and the school term had increased to seventy-five days. Minor changes had been made in the school legislation since the passage of the new school law of 1872, and the friends of education were making every effort to bring the schools to a creditable place in the public mind.

Another constitution was adopted for Georgia in 1877 with new and more definite and more advanced educational provisions, and in December of that year Orr said:

The public school system of Georgia is steadily gaining ground and may now be considered firmly established in the State. The new constitution incorporates in its provisions the same essential requirements on this subject as those contained in the constitution of 1868. This is a great step for us, as one of the greatest difficulties in the way of success was for a long time the prejudice arising from the

<sup>1</sup>See also act of March 3, 1874.

manner of the adoption of the common school system. This feeling arose from the fact that the instrument above mentioned was made by a body which did not represent the people of Georgia, and many of whose acts were very odious to them. This sentiment, however, can no longer exist, as the convention of 1877 was composed of men of our own selection, and their work has been overwhelmingly ratified by the people at the polls. Thus a barrier to progress, already melting away, is now entirely gone.

Following the passage of the school law in March, 1869, a board of education was organized for Louisiana and steps were taken immediately to put the new school system into operation. But suitable persons were difficult to find to serve as local school officers, there appeared an opposition to taxation for public-school purposes, and the state school fund was hardly sufficient to maintain schools for more than a month in the year. Immediate need appeared for an amendment to the school law so as to supply adequate funds and to simplify the school machinery. That particular feature of the law which provided for compulsory mixed schools continued to render "the whole system obnoxious" until a system more conformable to the habits of the people was introduced in 1877.

In 1870, according to the report of T. W. Conway, the state superintendent of schools, the school population numbered 253,000, but only 23,000 were enrolled in only 230 schools, with 524 teachers. The school system was proving to be very defective and very difficult to administer, and it was subjected to "constant clinic treatment" by the Legislature throughout the reconstruction period, but without very great success.

The requirement that all public schools should be open alike to all children of educable age without distinction of race or color went far toward preventing the successful operation of the system. The need for modifying the law and the rules of the state board of education appeared urgent from the outset. There was probably no other State in which the work of public schools was attempted under more discouraging disadvantages than those

encountered in Louisiana. But the mixed-school provisions excited a determined opposition generally and especially on the part of those who would otherwise have coöperated in the support of the school plan. On this point Conway said :

It was irrational to overlook the fact that this active antagonism of so large a portion of the white population of the State is a formidable hindrance to our school work. However unreasonable it may be shown to be and unworthy the intelligence of the age, its undeniable existence and influence must be taken into account in any estimate of past progress or of future prospects. The noblest vessel, however ably managed, makes but slow progress when forced to contend with both wind and tide.

Principally on account of this condition but little progress was made in public education in Louisiana during the reconstruction period. And largely on account of the mixed-school plan the Peabody Board was unable to coöperate with the state authorities until the close of the period. The benefit of the public-school funds was being enjoyed chiefly by the colored children, and the white children were generally without the advantages of public education. At best, however, very little was actually achieved for the children of either race. Out of a school population of 280,000 only 30,000 were in school in 1872, and three years later conditions had improved only slightly and remained unsatisfactory until after 1876, when the State was restored to home rule. By that time the sum of \$2,137,000 of the school funds had been misapplied by the reconstructionists. By 1877 a new school system had been inaugurated under conservative influence, and Mr. Sears, of the Peabody Board, reported that "the present prospect is that all classes of the people will unite in the work of education."

It was noted in the preceding chapter that the reconstruction constitution and the school of law of January, 1869, gave Florida provisions for an educational organization which was theoretically an improvement over the plan in operation during the ante-bellum

period. This advanced plan proved ineffective, however, to any really creditable achievement in public-school affairs, and it was many years after the undoing of the reconstruction rule that schools began to enjoy their rightful share of public confidence. Distrust of and indifference to public education characterized the years from 1868 to 1877 and were largely the result of the bitterness and violence which prevailed and the open and shameless bribery and fraud which were so generally practiced throughout the period. Florida suffered many injustices and terrors at the hands of the reconstructionists, who, through corruption and misgovernment of a most revolting nature, betrayed the State that they might enrich themselves.<sup>1</sup>

In counties with superintendents appointed under the law of January, 1869, the organization of the public-school system was undertaken without delay. But the general inauguration of the plan was slow, and in 1871 the reports showed that fully three fourths of the children of the State were yet "unreached by the educational system." In general the disturbed condition of the State and other unfortunate circumstances were very unfavorable to public schools. In 1873 the school population numbered approximately 75,000, with nearly 20,000 enrolled and about 15,000 in average attendance. Some of the schools reported were not strictly public schools, but were controlled and supported in large measure by philanthropic or other similar agencies. Throughout these years opposition to the public-school system was more or less intense. The complete control of the State by people who were unsympathetic if not hostile to Southern sentiment accounted in very large measure for the failure of the school system to grow and develop as had been promised in 1869.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The public debt of Florida was increased from \$524,000 in 1868 to \$5,620,000 in 1874.

<sup>2</sup>J. C. Gibbs, a colored man, served as state superintendent of schools from 1872 to 1874. Gibbs was born in Philadelphia in 1831 and was a graduate of Dartmouth. He was a minister in the Presbyterian Church and had come South in 1865 as an agent of the Old School Presbyterian Assembly, to organize schools and churches among the freedmen. He came into



The conservatives returned to the control of the State in 1877, and the report of the state superintendent the following year showed a slight increase in educational sentiment and progress. During the year 1877-1878 a larger percentage of the school population had been enrolled and a more creditable average attendance was reported. There was reported also a considerable increase in the number of schools sustained, a much longer average school term, the employment of better-qualified teachers, and the adoption of county uniformity in textbooks. The financial condition of many of the counties was improved, yet there was evident need of greatly increased funds for school purposes. The schools for the colored people were "sustained in proportion to their population, and these people express themselves satisfied that justice has been accorded them."

The school system provided for in Mississippi under the law of July 4, 1870, went into operation a few months afterwards under the superintendency of Henry R. Pease, a native of Connecticut. He had been a captain in the United States Army and later was an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau. Pease served as superintendent until 1873.

The local administrative officers of the system were appointed by military authority until the regular election in November, 1871. As a result of such appointment most of these school officers were radicals, scalawags, Negroes, or carpetbaggers. Under the law they had rather large power, including that of levying local taxes for school purposes. And this power led almost immediately to pretentious and visionary but costly and extravagant schemes for educational work in the State. The conservative white people, who, in large measure, paid the taxes, were given practically

Florida in 1867 and became secretary of state under the constitution of 1868, serving until 1872, when he became superintendent of the public schools. He was described as "a dark mulatto, of fine appearance and gentlemanly manners," and is said to have been a man of more than average ability and quite highly respected. But the people of Florida were naturally unhappy and disconcerted at having a negro to head their schools.

no voice in the direction of the public schools,—a condition which developed hostility to public education. The power of raising local school funds was placed “in the hands of men who were not required to share the burdens which they imposed; who, in many cases, had lived only a short time in the State, and consequently had little appreciation of the difficulty the Southern whites were having in trying to adjust themselves to the new economic situation; who often belonged to the less worthy class of immigrants, with no experience in the affairs of government, and with the selfish exploitation of the country too often as their only excuse for being there. The evils bred by this plan of organization were legion. Misunderstandings arose where none should have existed; injustice was done when none was intended; lack of sympathy was at first well-nigh universal; fraud and corruption were not infrequent.”<sup>1</sup>

Practically half of the total expenditures for schools during the first year of the system was “absolutely thrown away,” and the heavy expenditures were so extravagant that they “staggered even the reconstruction leaders.” The negro schools were particularly well cared for during this and the next few years, the expenses for this maintenance being abnormally heavy. In one county, where the number of colored children was four times larger than the number of white children, a large number of well-equipped schools were provided and teachers were employed at salaries so much larger than the salaries paid the teachers of white schools that the comparison was a cause of much dissatisfaction.

Cases of fraud and corruption in the management of the public-school fund were naturally numerous during the period. “All over the State the robbery through the school system was especially rank,” “the manner in which the school boards of some counties are swindling the people is enough to drive them mad,” are contemporary statements which describe with fair exactness some of the evils on which the schools had fallen. The result was an

<sup>1</sup> Noble, *Forty Years of the Public Schools in Mississippi*, pp. 32, 33.

outright opposition to the system, which often expressed itself in acts of violence in which school property was destroyed and teachers terrorized and driven from the State.

Disorders natural to the period practically forced Mississippi into a state of economic collapse. Between 1870 and 1872 the state debt more than doubled, real property decreased in value from \$118,000,000 in 1870 to \$95,000,000 six years later, and personal property decreased during the same time from \$59,000,000 to \$35,000,000. All through these years the financial system of the State was in a distressing condition, but the reconstruction policy of heavy taxes and extravagant expenditures continued. Moreover, the permanent school fund suffered a shameful loss. Under such conditions public schools had little chance to develop and operate with any degree of success.

In 1873 Thomas W. Cardoza, a negro who was under indictment for embezzlement, succeeded Pease as superintendent. Two years later, however, the control of the affairs of the State was returned to the conservatives, and reconstruction came to a close immediately thereafter. Impeachment charges were preferred against Cardoza for maladministration and the misappropriation of public-school funds, and that officer preferred resignation to trial.<sup>1</sup>

Here, as in some of the other Southern States, the conservative reaction to the radical policy of reconstruction led at once to practices of rigid economy in public education—practices which have too long prevailed in the entire South. Reconstruction left Mississippi almost bankrupt economically and pitifully depressed and depleted in spirit. It is not surprising, therefore, that it along with the other Southern States has lagged behind in public educational endeavor. But the conservative leaders set themselves heroically to the discouraging task of providing for the children of the State better and safer educational advantages, and with the return to home rule in the fall of 1875 they sought to make

<sup>1</sup>Other state officers, including Governor Ames, were also impeached at this time.

such provision through new educational legislation and by other means. "The people of Mississippi," declared one of those leaders in 1876, "have suffered enough already from ignorance and its consequences, blind prejudices in governmental affairs, and they will not refuse to use any means in their power to remove them."

The new school system of Arkansas under the reconstruction régime was set up in August, 1868, under the superintendency of Thomas Smith, whose first report appeared three months later. During that and the following year fully half of the entire school fund was paid to the ten circuit superintendents. These officers were appointed very largely for political purposes and gave most of their attention to politics, and their reports showed that they were not qualified for their duties. Lack of adequate funds was another obstacle in the way of the new schools.

The school system accomplished very little during the entire reconstruction period. The total school population seems to have decreased during the first five years of that time, though the number of teachers, schoolhouses, and the value of school property slightly increased. The enrollment for these years was very poor. In 1868 about 39 per cent of the total white school population and about 37 per cent of the total colored school population were enrolled. In 1876 less than 9 per cent of the white children were attending school, and statistics for the attendance of the colored children were not given at all for that year. The total public-school revenues decreased from \$300,000 in 1868 to about \$40,000 in 1875.

Unwise educational legislation and an act of 1869 which made the treasurer's certificates of the State receivable for state dues and debts discouraged the friends of education and disheartened the teachers, many of whom left the State. For these and other reasons public educational facilities became very meager, and the schools "literally died of starvation." Smith had been succeeded in office in January, 1873, by J. C. Corbin, a negro graduate of Oberlin College, who had come into Arkansas with the United States army and had attained some prominence. His report for



the following year, like practically all the reports on education during the reconstruction period, revealed deplorable conditions.

In April and May, 1874, the State witnessed a heated struggle between the conservative element and the reconstruction, or radical, element, known as the "Brooks-Baxter War." Reconstruction practically came to a close, however, on May 14 of that year, when President Grant proclaimed Baxter the legal governor of the State and ordered Brooks and his following to disperse. Authority then passed into the hands of the conservatives, whose representatives met in convention in July and formed a new constitution, which was submitted to the people in October, 1874, and adopted as the organic law of the State.

The new constitution provided for the education of all the children of the State, for making the school funds inviolable, for an annual capitation tax and a uniform property tax for schools, but left local school taxation optional with the voters. One striking evidence of conservative reaction to the rule of reconstruction, however, was the constitutional abolition of the office of state superintendent of schools—a step taken no doubt because Corbin, who was superintendent at that time, was so unfavorable to the conservatives. The reestablishment of this office was left to legislative action, and by an act of December, 1875, the superintendency was restored. It had appeared best to the convention and "to those in power to let the old system practically die and then to build anew on the basis of home rule, honest money, conservatism in expenditures, and honesty in administration."<sup>1</sup>

It was many years after the close of reconstruction in Arkansas, as in other Southern States, before the school system regained its strength and established its proper place in public esteem. But in his report for the year ending July 1, 1876, Superintendent George W. Hill said:

There is light ahead for our common-school system. This is no groundless assertion. It is based upon assurances from all parts of the

<sup>1</sup> Weeks, *History of Public School Education in Arkansas*, p. 60.

State of growing intelligence, of an increasing spirit of inquiry, of awakened appreciation of education, of lessening hostility to free schools, of the waning indifference of the people to the efforts of the State in behalf of education, of an enlarging number of friends and advocates of common schools, of a more earnest call for teachers of higher qualifications, of more agitation of the public mind on the free-school question, of a greater disposition on the part of the press to speak in advocacy of common schools, and of better county and district officers being elected.

The new school system established in Tennessee under the act of March, 1867, began under the superintendency of John Eaton (a native of New Hampshire), who, during the lately closed war, had attained the rank of brigadier general in the United States army. Eaton served from October of that year to March, 1870, but was unable to set the schools properly to work and to organize the system in any effective fashion. The political and social disorder prevailing in the State made the educational legislation of 1867 very unpopular. And in spite of what seemed to be a fair financial provision for schools, it soon became very evident that there was a big difference between school funds due and school funds available. The use of the school funds for other purposes threw distrust on the public educational plan, which was met at every point by doubt and opposition. This hostility was aroused by the misapplication of the funds by the reconstruction government. The system also lacked vitality; and it seemed to be the opinion of the best men of the State, even of the reconstructionists, that "so long as we pay taxes for the express purpose of maintaining free schools, and yet, by wrongdoing of state officers, have so little return in the shape of schools, the system will be a nullity and a sham." As late as 1869 only a few counties had complied with the law of 1867. Moreover, it was difficult to secure suitable men to serve as county superintendents. In some counties as many as seven successive appointments had been made, and too often the work of organizing the schools was placed in the hands of the ignorant and incompetent.

The conservative candidates for the Legislature were elected in August, 1869, and the radical control of the State practically came to a close shortly afterwards. This Legislature responded to the demand for economy and decentralization in educational administration, and the law of 1867 was superseded by an act of December, 1869, which practically destroyed the state organization of schools and turned them over to the authority of the counties. The office of state superintendent was abolished, and Eaton was given ninety days to close up the educational affairs of the State. This reactionary measure "was not inspired by hostility to public schools, but was believed to be the best that the temper of the public mind and the disordered financial condition of the State would then warrant." It was a protest against petty politics and the policies of reconstruction. The conservatives honestly believed that the schools needed to be relieved of the taint of misrule and of radical exploitation before they could win and keep their proper place in the confidence of the public.

In March, 1870, a new constitution was formed and adopted for the State, and frequent educational legislation was enacted during the next few years. But the practical operation of the schools showed but little work that was creditable. In 1873 the office of state superintendent was restored and other legislative improvements made. Public confusion continued, however, and the schools made practically no progress. The system was described as wholly unsuited for the purposes of education and "totally destitute of energy." This condition seems to have continued for several years. The reports that came from a few of the counties were full of discouragement, and it is highly probable that not more than one fifth of the educable children of the State enjoyed public educational opportunity during a large part of the years from 1868 to 1876. In this latter year the State had a school population of 434,000, with 194,000 enrolled and only 125,000 in daily attendance. The schools operated about seventy days in the year, and the average monthly salary of the teachers was about \$32. Improvement in term and salary was later only slowly made.

It was not until 1871 that Texas had any kind of an organized system of public schools under the new plan of the previous year. J. C. DeGress had become state superintendent, and while he reported promise of a good school system for the State, he also reported strong opposition and much prejudice shown by occasional intimidation of teachers and acts of violence. Difficulty was also experienced in selecting local school directors and in the collection of the county school taxes. The school law of 1870, which had been found to be impracticable, was modified in 1871, but improvement in legislation did not greatly reveal itself in the operation of the schools. The condition of the colored schools is indicated by such reports as this:

Schools for colored children have been opened all over the State, and are crowded to overflowing with children who evince an eager thirst for knowledge that augurs well for the future of the race. The problem that agitated the Southern mind a few years ago, of what would be the future of the colored people, is settled, for education will make them self-reliant, self-supporting, and valuable citizens. They enter into the educational work before them with a zest that bespeaks their full understanding of its importance. Where it has been impossible to lease buildings for school-houses, they have offered their churches, and in many instances, have clubbed together and put up buildings for the purpose.

The greatest difficulty experienced in giving them the benefits of the law has been in procuring teachers for them, few persons having the nerve and hardihood to meet the continual insults, the social ostracism, the threats of injury, and all the annoyances to which teachers of colored schools are subject. Some few teachers have braved all this and conquered; but in other cases insult and intimidation have done their work, and the schools are closed for want of teachers. In some communities teachers of colored schools have been unable to procure board or even lodging; in other instances they have been dragged from their houses at night and whipped; others, going to their school-houses in the morning have found them a heap of ashes.

This state of affairs can be remedied in every community by the citizens frowning upon such violations of law, but they will not do it till they begin to feel that their interest demands it. . . .



Scarcity of funds and the mismanagement of those available for schools led to confusion and actual distress among the teachers who were engaged in the system during the early years of its operation. In 1873 the Legislature repealed the school law of 1871 and enacted one which dispensed with the state board of education and substituted local control through county organization. Conditions did not improve by such changes, though the friends of the schools were brave in the face of great opposition and during intense political strife. There was considerable confusion, and the work proceeded so poorly and was in such an unsettled condition that the Peabody Board did not feel justified in making further donations to the State. But the leaders made public appeal for efficient, paid county superintendents, trained teachers, prompt and liberal payments by the State for school support, improved schoolhouses, and a minimum school term of six months. It was pointed out that public schools depend for their support on the sympathies and coöperation of the people and that such assistance could be secured only by making the schools in every way worthy. The reconstruction régime practically came to a close in Texas in 1874, but as late as 1876 school conditions were not reassuring there. Two years later, however, signs of improvement appeared, and the schools were reported as growing in popular favor, and no fears were entertained for the future.

S. S. Ashley, a minister from Massachusetts, was elected the first superintendent of schools for North Carolina under the reconstruction plan. He was a man of some ability, but very narrow in view and so prejudiced that he was not always cautious in his behavior. He was especially interested in mixed schools for the State, and this interest served to make him very unpleasant to the native conservative population.

His first report appeared in November, 1868, before the new educational legislation had been enacted, and showed that almost nothing was being done for public schools. The income for school purposes was very meager and in striking contrast to the liberal fund for school support before 1860. Ashley believed, however,

that some schools would be opened in the fall of 1869 and that by the beginning of 1870 many communities in the State would be supplied with educational facilities. Aid was expected from the school taxes, but this source of support proved to be very uncertain during the early years of reconstruction. Several outside agencies were aiding education in the State, however, during this time. Among them were the Baltimore Association of Friends, the Soldiers' Memorial Society of Boston, the American Unitarian Association, and the Peabody Board. The education of the freedmen was receiving attention from the Freedmen's Bureau, the New England Freedmen's Relief Association, the New York Freedmen's Relief Association, the American Missionary Association, the Friends' Freedmen's Aid Association, the Presbyterian General Assembly, and other organizations. Through Reverend F. A. Fiske, of Massachusetts, an educational campaign for the freedmen was carried on by the Freedmen's Bureau, and the Peabody Board was aiding several towns to maintain schools and was stimulating interest in public education generally.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of funds, scarcity of teachers, defective legislation, uncertainty and confusion, partisan strife, and fraud and extravagance in the state government promised nothing but failure for the new school system, which was meeting obstacles at almost every point. Added to these ills was a decision of the supreme court which held that the provision of the school law of 1869 for local school taxes was unconstitutional and could not be enforced. And with public opinion so strongly against the levying of school taxes under the radical régime, the entire school system was practically inoperative.

The legislature which met in the fall of 1870 was largely conservative and concerned itself almost entirely with the impeachment of Governor Holden. But two acts of educational importance were passed. One reduced the salary of the state superintendent from \$2400 to \$1500, removed the clerical force of that officer, and allowed him no funds for traveling expenses; the other looked to

<sup>1</sup> See Knight, *Public School Education in North Carolina*, for a fuller discussion of the schools in North Carolina during reconstruction.

the better protection of the literary fund. Both acts reflected reaction to the radical régime, and that reaction continued for many years after the final overthrow of reconstruction. In the fall of 1871 conservative influence enacted a new school law to take the place of that of 1869 and with more liberal provisions for public education. Among these provisions was that of a property and a special capitation tax for school support. Plans were also provided for institutes for the training of teachers, and the report of the superintendent for 1872 was much better than that of any previous reconstruction reports of the school work of the State.<sup>1</sup> But conditions were yet far from satisfactory. The principle of public taxation for school support was receiving wider acceptance, but its application to the needs and conditions of the State was a more difficult task. Moreover, the fear of mixed schools and the agitation in Congress of the Civil Rights Bill added confusion and alarm.

Between 1873 and 1875 only slight improvement appeared. The concluding steps to overthrow the rule of reconstruction were taken in the constitutional convention of 1875, however, and in the campaign which followed the next year the work of the convention was of great political and social importance, because many changes were made which promised the promotion of better government in the State. Among the educational changes of the new constitution was the requirement for separate schools for the children of the two races, removing finally the fear of the possibility of mixed schools.

The new constitution went into effect January 1, 1877, and two significant educational acts were passed by the first legislature meeting under it. One act established two normal schools—one for each race—and provided for their maintenance. The other gave authority to townships of a certain size to levy special taxes for public graded schools. Conditions appeared more promising, and Dr. Sears of the Peabody Board reported that the tide of

<sup>1</sup> Ashley resigned when the Legislature reduced his salary, and Alexander McIver, a professor in the State University, was appointed by the governor to fill the vacancy.

public opinion had been turned in favor of education and would thereafter be difficult to resist.

In many respects public education in North Carolina during reconstruction suffers when compared with that of the ante-bellum period. Teachers were paid a higher salary in North Carolina before the war than during reconstruction or until after 1900. A larger percentage of the school population was enrolled in school in 1860 than at any time during reconstruction. Moreover, the reconstruction régime failed to improve the provisions for state, county, and local administrative organization and supervision. Finally, evidence is strong that had the native conservative element of the State been free to act without unwholesome influences from the outside a safer and more adequate educational plan than that supplied by reconstruction would have been outlined and promoted.

Superintendent Jillson made his first report on the schools of South Carolina before the new school law described in the preceding chapter had been enacted for that State. He complained that the failure of the Legislature to pass a school law at its regular session of 1868-1869 had kept the department in a state of comparative inactivity for nearly a year, with the result that the children and youth of "this commonwealth are daily growing up in ignorance—a state which leads to poverty and crime." The report, therefore, covered the work accomplished under the act to provide for the temporary organization of the educational department of the State, which was passed in September, 1868.

Many difficulties confronted the new system from the outset. Inexperience of school officers, lack of suitable houses, scarcity of good teachers, indifference and impatience of the people, insufficient school support, the hatred of mixed schools, and defective legislation were some of the more stubborn obstacles. In most instances the school officers entered upon their duties with little or no experience to aid them in their tasks; but few of the school-houses were the property of the State, and many of those in use were "most miserable affairs, entirely destitute of even the most rude and simple comforts and conveniences of a modern school



room." The superintendent urged legislative authority to enable local communities to raise funds to remedy the defect. The employment of inefficient and incompetent teachers was an evil perhaps more keenly felt than any other, and this condition persisted throughout the reconstruction period and even later. "Probably no State in the union is so cursed with poor teachers as South Carolina," said the superintendent. Native white teachers reluctantly assumed charge of schools, native colored teachers as a class were almost wholly incompetent, and it was equally difficult to secure teachers from abroad. The evil was believed to be largely the fault of the county boards of examiners, who granted certificates to persons "whose ignorance was glaringly apparent to the most careless observer." Moreover, the small salaries which they received and the uncertainty of final payment decreased the number of the better class of teachers. The unfulfilled promises of the legislature to pay the school appropriations closed many of the schools in 1872. Public confidence was betrayed, and teachers were unable to obtain their salaries on presentation of their certificates to the county treasurers. In many cases the teachers were forced to dispose of their certificates at "unreasonable and oppressive rates of discount to other parties who are doubtless either in collusion with or in the interest or employ of, sharks and shavers connected directly or indirectly with the county treasury."

The superintendent complained from time to time of the natural apathy and impatience of the people throughout the State. Some appeared "sadly indifferent concerning educational matters, not caring whether school keeps or not." They also seemed to complain because the advantages of the system did not immediately appear throughout the entire State. Some opposition developed because of the cost of maintaining schools. The theory that education is a matter for the individual or the family and not the State had well developed in South Carolina before the war, and the effect of this philosophy was difficult to overcome. Throughout the entire period the schools were in great need of funds. Although the constitution was clear on the subject of state support,

providing for the entire capitation tax to be applied to this purpose, the poll tax soon appeared to be a very unreliable source of school revenue. Moreover, the constitution required the general assembly to lay a property tax for schools, but the Legislature was slow, and it was not until 1873 that such a tax was levied.

The reconstruction régime has been credited with extraordinary interest in education by reason of so-called legislative appropriations for schools.<sup>1</sup> The general assemblies did appear liberal and wise in this matter, but in most of the Southern States, especially South Carolina, their appropriations seem not to have been paid fully or even in large part.<sup>2</sup>

The presence and influence of the negro in political, educational, and social affairs also served to complicate an otherwise anomalous condition in the State. Just how far the promoters of the mixed-school legislation expected to extend is a matter for conjecture, but that it was perhaps the unwisest action of the period is a certainty, for it lent itself to a most unfortunate and damaging reaction for many years after the return to home rule. The principal objection raised to the school system during this time arose from the fear and hatred of mixed schools, which were not demanded by either race. On the contrary, both races were violently opposed to the scheme, and the friends of the schools constantly urged the adoption of separate schools. But the agitation in Congress of the Civil Rights Bill had the effect of aggravating a prejudice which had begun to develop with the state constitutional provision for mixed schools.

The damaging effect of the policy can be seen in the case of the university, known before the war as the South Carolina College. This institution had a very creditable career and an extensive influence from 1801, when it was chartered, until the war, when it was severely crippled. After the political conditions began to adjust themselves the institution was reopened, but a radical change in

<sup>1</sup>One of the largest items in the budgets of reconstruction was for schools.  
—Dunning, *Reconstruction Political and Economic*, p. 206

<sup>2</sup>See Knight, *Reconstruction and Education in South Carolina*.

1869 in the personnel of its trustees and the admission of negro students so increased distrust and apprehension that most of the white students left. In 1873, when the state normal school was organized, it was located in one of the university buildings. The university professors were required to lecture to the normal students, the majority of whom were negroes, and the university library was also to be used by the normal school. Until this time the negroes had made but few attempts to avail themselves of the privileges of the university, though there were grave apprehensions that its usefulness would be jeopardized by the policy of the dominant party.

In 1873 Henry E. Hayne, the negro secretary of State, entered the school of medicine. Though "neither vindictive nor aggressive" he had aroused a prejudice among the white people two years before in going to a communion table at a mission church. This incident created such a sensation that the mission was finally suspended. When he registered in the university three members of the faculty resigned. In accepting the resignations the trustees announced their pleasure that "a spirit so hostile to the welfare of our State . . . will no longer be represented in the university, which is the common property of all our citizens without distinction of race." Negroes now entered the institution in large numbers, among them the negro treasurer of the State, E. L. Cardozo, and other adults. In a short time nearly nine tenths of the students, numbering nearly two hundred, were negroes. In 1877 the institution was closed, but it was opened again three years later as the College of Agricultural and Mechanical Arts.

Defects in the school law, which was made hurriedly by legislators who had little knowledge of conditions for which they were providing, were other obstacles which continued in South Carolina throughout the period. Lack of adequate authority for cities, towns, and local districts to raise special taxes for educational purposes was a crying need of the period. Adequate provision for training and certificating teachers was also greatly needed, as well as provisions for a more businesslike and safe business

administration of the system. Complaints were constantly made against the lax methods of handling school finances,—a complaint universal in the South during these years. The collection of the poll tax was loosely conducted; frequently only those who had taxable property were required to pay it, and failure to pay this tax did not disfranchise.

It should be remembered that during this period the State was not under home rule and that there was little chance for native white leadership in political or educational effort. Moreover, the State was pitifully bankrupt. The Legislature was largely composed of illiterate negroes, local political puppets, and designing demagogues, whose policy was one of stolid opposition to white leadership. Flagrant bribery schemes were common, political positions were bought and sold as a common commodity, fraud and extravagance created enormous debts, constituting a colossal reproach to the State. These abnormal and irregular conditions naturally reached the school system and made it "worse than a failure." And it required many years for the schools of the State to recover from the setback given them by the rule of reconstruction.

Under an abundance of legislative authority the board of education of Alabama began to set the new school system in operation in that State in the summer and fall of 1868. Dr. N. B. Cloud was appointed superintendent of schools. The new system did not differ very materially from that of ante-bellum days except in constitutional declaration that the schools were to be entirely free to the children of the State. Two real difficulties, however, immediately confronted the plan. One was the extreme difficulty of securing competent local officers to assist in the administration of the laws, and the other was the serious lack of funds with which to establish and maintain for a creditable term a sufficient number of schools. There was no legislative provision for capitation or property taxation for the schools, and they were forced to depend on the income from the permanent fund, which was largely a paper fund, and on the legislative appropriation of \$100,000, which was



not always dependable. Moreover, local school officers employed teachers and opened schools without knowing the amount of the funds available from the State. And the lack of funds led to the opening of a large number of schools which "accomplished nothing." There were too many children for the teachers and too many teachers for the funds available. "The sum total of schools and pupils made a large show upon paper," but the schools were generally closed "before the pupils had time to learn the alphabet."

Carelessness and mismanagement were other causes of slow and unsatisfactory growth of public schools in the State. A large number of incompetent men had been county superintendents in 1868. They were described as "ignorant, dilatory, or unmindful of their plain duties," and as the real reason for the decrease in school interests. In 1870 the Legislature, which was conservative, had appointed a commission to examine the office and work of the state superintendent, and the report showed evidence of carelessness and unsystematic management of the school work. Cloud was charged with paying out the school funds "without due regard to the interest of the State," but it was shown that this had been done with the consent of the attorney general. The governor referred to the report as showing "not only an unsatisfactory, but a most shameful and reprehensible state of things. The facts set forth by the commissioners are surely a stern condemnation of the management of our educational system during the past year."

From 1870 to 1872 Joseph Hodgson, conservative, was superintendent, and during this period there was a reorganization of the board of education. In the winter of 1870 legislation was enacted which looked to an improvement in the school conditions. Provision was made for the election of county and local district school officers so as to make available for their positions some of the best men in the State, and attempts were also made to economize in the expenses of administration. In a year these expenses were reduced nearly 50 per cent. Reforms of the system of accounting were likewise undertaken, since it had been found that more than \$260,000 drawn from the state treasury since 1868 was not

accounted for and that more than \$210,000 in warrants was still unpaid. More than \$124,000 for the years from 1868 to 1871 had not been certified by the auditor to local school officers, and there was at the end of that time a total of more than \$940,000 due the schools by the treasury, an amount larger than the entire revenue of the State.

The result of the superintendent's critical review of the financial condition of the school system led to a controversy between that officer and the auditor of the State not altogether unlike the controversy in Virginia a few years later over a similar condition (see pp. 341 ff.). A provision in the Alabama law permitted the county superintendents to draw in advance the county's quota of school funds, a privilege which led to a dangerous practice of misusing or allowing such funds to remain idle.<sup>1</sup> This provision of the law was repealed, however, in January, 1871. Concerning the custom in Alabama the auditor of that State said:

Sound policy would dictate that no money be drawn from the state treasury until earned in the various townships, and when drawn by the county superintendents, it should be for direct transmission to the teachers by whom it was earned. No county superintendent should be allowed to retain thousands of dollars, belonging to the State for the use of schools, for a term of months, especially when the treasury became embarrassed by such action.

After the change in administration in 1870 the school system began to show slight signs of improvement. By 1872 the term had been increased 35 per cent, available school funds had been increased more than 17 per cent, and the average attendance had more than doubled in the two years. An organization of the teachers of the State was formed, teachers' institutes were developing with a degree of success and satisfaction, four normal schools for each race were established, the school laws were gradually being

<sup>1</sup> Compare this practice with that allowed in Virginia before the war (see pp. 211 ff.).

improved, and public education was beginning slowly to make a different and more wholesome appeal to the people.

Reconstruction had practically ended in Alabama, so far as the schools were concerned, in 1870, when the conservatives got control. Considerable progress was made, however, during the next two years. But in 1872 politics again favored the radicals, and Joseph H. Speed, one of them, became the head of the public-school system. One of his initial public acts was that of making political capital of the argument of his conservative opponents by urging retrenchment and severe economy in public education. He declared that "every dollar of the public school fund and the university fund given the State by the general government has either been squandered or lost. Let us satisfy our tax-burdened people that every cent of their money shall be honestly, judiciously, and economically expended, and that all disbursing school officers shall be held to the severest account. . . . It has been represented that many county superintendents of education are in default. . . . Those who have been unfaithful and dishonest (if such there be) in applying and using the money raised for the education of the *poor children* of our State should not go unpunished."

By this time it had come to be generally recognized that the schools were in desperate financial difficulties and that the State had more teachers and more schools than the available funds could afford. And in December, 1872, the state board of education, which was still using its wide legislative powers, ordered the closing of all schools after January 1, 1873, until the local trustees were assured by the state superintendent that sufficient funds were available for the prompt payment of the teachers. As a result, Alabama had practically no public schools from January to October of 1873 except a few which were supported by local funds. Improvement was sought by legislative enactment in April of that year and by a memorial to Congress about the same time. But both the legislation and the memorial proved insufficient, and it was not until the following November that the authorities were

frank enough with themselves and the public to face the facts. At that time they acknowledged that there was no legislation to enforce the provision of the constitution that the school revenues "shall be inviolably appropriated to educational purposes and to no other purpose whatever." It was further set forth that since the organization of the system in 1868 there had been no legislative regard for that provision of the constitution, but that each year had seen an increasing amount of the school fund diverted to the general expenses of the State. This condition had forced the schools to close.

During the next few years considerable improvement was noticed in the operation of the system. Among other things the school term reached ninety days for the white and eighty-three days for the colored children. In 1874 the conservatives again assumed control, and the following year a new constitution was adopted to supersede that of 1868. Improvement was sought by making provision for more adequate school revenues, by making such funds available when needed, by legislation to regulate the schools wisely and disburse the funds properly, and by seeking a better type of county superintendent. Even with these attempts at improvement, however, it was difficult for many years for the schools to gain properly in strength and influence. The unwise behavior of the reconstructionists had here as in other Southern States held out false hopes to the people, who were led to expect too much from the new school plan that came in 1868. The constitution of 1868 had introduced foreign elements and ideas, but all changes "tended back toward the ante-bellum norm." It seems clear that the Alabama system of public education grew out of the actual experiences of the people of that State. In his report in November, 1876, which covered the work of the schools for the two preceding years, Superintendent John M. McKleroy said:

In that period great improvement and advancement has been made. The principle of the power and propriety of a State to maintain a system of free public education has been affirmed in unmistakable terms



by the people of this State, and they have implanted it in the constitution made by themselves, and in the same instrument they have made liberal provisions for its support, thus guaranteeing its permanency and usefulness.

✓By July, 1870, the technical part of the reconstruction process had been completed, with the enactment of legislation which declared Georgia entitled to representation in Congress. By that time the Southern States which had formed the Confederacy had been made over by the formation of new governments and the creation of a new political people. Passionate political feelings were involved in every step of this process and grave errors were committed. Not the least grave of these was the sudden and indiscriminate gift of the ballot to men who were entirely unprepared for its intelligent use. Even in this policy partisan purposes had entered fully. A natural result, as may be seen in this chapter, was a serious crippling of schools and a deadening of public interest in education, for during the régime of riot and rascality the schools fell victim to the vengeance and cupidity of adventurers and malefactors. But before the last State was restored to relations with the Union the process for undoing reconstruction was well under way. By 1876 the first period in the undoing had come to an end, and the white people of the South were able to resume control of affairs. A second period began shortly afterwards and continued for more than two decades, during which time partisan feelings ran high and conflicts over the elimination of the negro from politics were fierce and demoralizing. The final stage of the unhappy reconstruction controversy which followed the surrender at Appomattox was destined to close, in a most singular manner, in a complete reversal of the policy and process which marked its beginning. During those two or more decades of turmoil, confusion, and bitterness the schools were again subordinated and often even sacrificed to less worthy interests, and the education of both whites and blacks fell pitifully into neglect. And in some of the Southern States public educational conditions were less wholesome and reassuring in the nineties than in 1860.

The cost to the South of those eight years of reconstruction (from 1868 to 1876) can never be accurately calculated. But even in those values which can be measured it is highly probable that reconstruction cost the South more than the war had cost. When reconstruction had ended in 1876, the personal property that had remained at the close of the war had almost entirely disappeared at the hands of the reconstructionists. But the people of the South bore with remarkable fortitude and courage their sense of defeat, as bitter as that had been. Nor did they repine at their loss of property, even by the force of arms, or at the disruption of their social system or the destruction of their distinctive civilization, of which the rest of the country has never had any accurate idea. These were no little burdens to bear, but the people assumed them bravely and went to work again—many of them with spirited energy and courage—to build on the memory of the old a new civilization. Between 1876 and the reawakening that began to appear near the close of the century, heroic effort was made at educational readjustment and development in the South. But the task was difficult and discouraging, and only slight educational progress was achieved. But the little work that was accomplished stands as testimony to the faith of the people, who were unwilling to be defeated by the obstacles which the crime of reconstruction had left as a heritage for their children.

Most of the perplexing problems which confront public education in the South today grew out of the mistakes of reconstruction. To the consideration of those problems and of the efforts that have been made to solve them the remaining chapters will be devoted.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Why were the elaborate constitutional and legislative provisions for public-school support and administration in the Southern States during reconstruction insufficient for the safe and adequate development of schools? In what way or ways did such provisions prove to be ineffective in your State?

2. What was the chief weakness of public education in your State between 1868 and 1876? What signs of improvement appeared after the latter date? In what way did such signs fail?

3. List and trace to their origin the principal causes of the slow growth of public education in the South between 1876 and 1900.

4. Study the influence of the following factors on public education in your State during reconstruction: (a) Freedmen's Bureau, (b) Civil Rights Bill, (c) prominent place of the freedmen in politics, (d) mismanagement and diversion of school funds, (e) incompetence of school officials, (f) defective legislation, (g) outside educational agencies of a private or philanthropic nature.

5. List the best educational influences at work in your State during the period under discussion.

6. Explain the meaning of "the undoing" of reconstruction. Why were public schools involved and subordinated in this process no less perhaps than in the process of reconstruction itself?

7. List the problems of public education in your State today that had their beginnings in reconstruction.

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## CHAPTER XI

### PEABODY FUND AND RISE OF CITY SCHOOLS

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. The Peabody Fund was a highly beneficial influence to education in the South. Its primary object was to promote common-school education.

2. The fund was to be distributed on certain sound principles which were adhered to throughout its operation. "Free schools for the whole people" was its motto.

3. The beneficiary States were the members of the Confederacy and West Virginia.

4. Work in Alabama began early and was productive of wholesome results. At first difficulties were met in Arkansas, which was in a "state of complete anarchy," but improvement finally appeared.

5. Conditions were discouraging in Florida, but by 1878 progress began to appear. That State was denied the benefits of the fund between 1885 and 1893. Georgia early participated in the appropriations from the fund, which strengthened interest in that State.

6. Conditions made it difficult for the fund to operate very satisfactorily in Louisiana before 1876. Similar conditions operated against the work in Mississippi until the same time. That State was omitted from the list of beneficiary States between 1885 and 1893.

7. North Carolina was among the first and the largest beneficiaries of the fund. South Carolina's share in the bounty was comparatively small, though considerable good was accomplished by it.

8. The work of the fund was very successful in Tennessee. Texas received the smallest share before 1876. After that date appropriations increased.

9. Virginia shared more bountifully in the fund than any of the States.

10. The influence of the fund was wide and definite as a service for promoting town and city school systems and advancing educational interests generally.

During the discouraging years which followed the war a highly beneficial and encouraging educational influence came to the South through the work of the Peabody Fund, which was created in 1867. George Peabody, the donor of the fund, was especially interested in public education and created the fund for the purpose of encouraging and promoting schools in "those portions of our beloved and common country which have suffered from the destructive ravages, and not less disastrous consequences, of civil war." In his letter to the sixteen trustees whom he named to manage and direct the work of the fund Mr. Peabody said :

I feel most deeply, therefore, that it is the duty and privilege of the most favored and wealthy portions of our nation to assist those who are less fortunate ; and with the wish to discharge, so far as I am able, my own responsibility in this matter, as well as to gratify my desire to aid those to whom I am bound by so many ties of attachment and regard, I give to you, gentlemen, most of whom have been my personal and especial friends, the sum of one million of dollars, to be by you and your successors held in trust and the income thereof used and applied in your discretion for the promotion and encouragement of intellectual, moral, or industrial education among the young of the more destitute portions of the Southern and Southwestern States of our Union ; my purpose being that the benefits intended shall be distributed among the entire population, without other distinction than their needs and the opportunities of usefulness to them.

The leading object of the trustees, as set forth in their original plan, was the promotion of primary or common-school education, through agencies then in existence or that might be created in the South. The other chief object was the furtherance of normal-school work for the professional preparation of teachers, by providing scholarships in Southern institutions and by giving aid to normal schools. The Reverend Barnas Sears, president of Brown University, was named as general agent of the fund, and to the delicate and difficult duties of the position he brought rare training and experience and great resourcefulness and adaptability. He took up his residence at Staunton, Virginia, in 1867 and for

thirteen years rendered the South a high order of genuine educational service.

The directions of Mr. Peabody were that the principal of the fund should remain intact for thirty years. It could not be expended, neither could it be increased by accruing interest; but the method of using the annual revenue, as well as the final disposition of the original endowment, was left entirely to the discretion of the trustees. The immediate need was obviously in the field of elementary instruction for the masses of Southern youth, and the trustees early determined to give assistance to public free schools. Their policy was to coöperate with state authorities so as to prevent disorder and to secure unity and strength of action. The funds were not to be distributed as a charity to the indigent. This had been a more or less prevalent ante-bellum educational practice in several of the Southern States and had proved inadequate to any effectual relief, wasteful, and productive of no valuable results. Moreover, the funds were not to be appropriated according to population or comparative community destitution but on the sound principle of helping those communities which would help themselves. The invariable adherence of the trustees to this principle was probably the greatest single educational blessing the South ever enjoyed. The purpose was to stimulate and encourage local initiative and community effort.

In addition to confining its attention to public free schools the fund was thoroughly committed to the following principles in promoting educational endeavor: rendering aid to schools where large numbers of children could be gathered and where a model system of schools could be organized and maintained; giving preference to those places which showed promise of influencing the surrounding community; making a limited number of schools effective rather than undertaking the "multiplication of schools languishing for want of sufficient support"; working for an improvement of state systems of education,—“to act through their organs and to make use of their machinery whenever” such agencies were offered; favoring the establishment and maintenance of normal schools over

normal departments in colleges and academies; giving special attention to the preparation of female teachers for primary schools, "rather than to general culture of young men in colleges, who will be likely to teach in the higher schools for the benefit of the few"; encouraging colored students who were preparing to teach to attend regular normal schools; favoring the support of state supervision, the formulation of state teachers' associations, and the publication of educational periodicals.

The policy of the fund and its administration was thus outlined. "Free schools for the whole people" became its motto and aim. And the conditions on which every appropriation was to be made were precisely those needed to secure coöperation with and security for the plan. No other method could have created or assisted in creating a wholesome educational sentiment or could have had the effect of encouraging local taxation for public schools. The absence of any element of charity in the plan of distribution, as a means to temporary relief, illustrates the sound judgment which marked the entire administration of the trust.

The States aided by the fund were West Virginia and the members of the Confederacy, all of which participated liberally in the distribution of the bounty. During the first ten years of the operation of the fund nearly a million dollars was distributed by it to aid public-school education in the South. In addition to appropriations of money thousands of textbooks were also distributed to schools in the Southern States.

Dr. Sears began his work by visiting the various States, conferring with the authorities, and offering aid to those communities which showed interest in the development of a system of free public schools. Systematic and detailed reports were regularly made to the trustees of the general agent's work, and these became for nearly thirty years one of the most reliable and satisfactory sources of information concerning public education in the South.

Alabama was one of the first States visited, and there Sears found that on account of the sparsity of population and the absence of large towns there was need for stimulation and assistance.



Aid was offered to Mobile, Montgomery, Talladega, Marion, Uniontown, Tuscaloosa, and Columbus, and in all these places creditable interest in education appeared. It was in Mobile that the ante-bellum school system in Alabama had had its beginning. Experiments had been made there as early as 1826, and these continued until 1852, when a fairly creditable system was set in operation and continued throughout the war. It was forced to suspend in the spring of 1865, however, though the schools were soon reorganized. In 1868 the town was maintaining a school system at an annual expense of \$25,000, but the impoverished condition of the treasury had forced resort to a rate bill for school support. In Montgomery there were no free schools in 1868, and a majority of the children were "educated only in the streets." These and other towns complied with the conditions of the Peabody Trustees and soon began to operate creditable schools.

The new constitution of the State was ratified in 1868. But the first school law enacted under the reconstruction régime was so repugnant to the sentiments of the people that it could not be enforced. It met with considerable opposition, and different political views proved a serious hindrance to its introduction. In consequence of such discouraging circumstances the scale of the Peabody operations was not greatly enlarged for several years after 1868. In some of the towns, however, litigation over the jurisdiction of state and local officers soon succeeded in nullifying previous agreements made with the Peabody Board. Moreover, conflicts between educational legislation of the State and the rules and regulations of the state board of education proved very detrimental to the general school interests of the State. The state board, by act of August 11, 1868, declared vacant all the offices of county superintendents, district trustees, and school commissioners. Later the board exercised its authority by repealing all school legislation passed before July 1, 1868, which in any way conflicted with its own rules and regulations. The general assembly, jealous of its authority and in retaliation, consistently opposed the measures of the state board and often repealed the acts of the latter.

These conditions were not the only obstacles facing the schools. Here as elsewhere in the South school funds were often used for other purposes, and as late as March, 1872, only two counties and two cities in Alabama had levied local taxes for school purposes. The people appeared hostile to local taxation, and in order to supplement the school funds, which were small and uncertain, it was necessary to resort to voluntary contributions.

But the Peabody Board continued to render assistance whenever possible. In 1873 the schools in Mobile reported some progress, and the schools in other communities were also improving; restricted and crippled resources were the chief difficulties in the way of greater success. Except in the towns and cities, however, the year seems to have been one of educational inactivity, and many schools were closed by act of the board of education on account of the depleted condition of the state treasury. But the financial embarrassment from which the schools were suffering was somewhat relieved shortly afterwards, and free schools were generally maintained. Further improvement appeared in 1875. Public schools for each race were maintained in practically all the districts of the State and were reported more popular than ever before. In the country the school term was nearly five months and in the towns almost eight months.

The conservatives regained control of the state government in 1875, and a new constitution went into operation in December of that year. The reaction was not so wholesome as could have been desired, but improvement soon began to appear. More attention was given to the training of teachers, and an interest in graded-school systems grew stronger. The state superintendent commented on the value of assistance from the Peabody Fund and its promotion of education in the larger towns, and recommended that future appropriations from that source be made to such of the smaller towns and communities "as will take hold of the matter in earnest, and will assist the State in building up such schools." During the first ten years of the operation of the fund Alabama received about \$55,000 to assist schools for the children of both races.

Sears was disappointed with the conditions in Arkansas on his first visit to that State in 1868. "I scarcely need to remark," he said in his report, "that Arkansas is in a state of complete anarchy: that in the present excited state of feeling, lawlessness and violence are liable to break out at any moment, rendering life and property alike insecure. Had I been suddenly dropped into the midst of the feudal disorder and turbulence of the tenth century, I should hardly have been more struck with the novelty and strangeness of the scene." He reported, however, that some of the people looked upon education "as foremost among the means indispensable to improvement." Two years later conditions showed some change. Schools were found in almost every county, and several of the larger towns were organizing school systems which were being aided and stimulated by the Peabody Board.

But a retrograde movement set in in 1872. By the act of 1868, which made the treasurer's certificates receivable for taxes and other debts due the State, teachers had been forced to accept their salaries in depreciated paper which ranged in discount from 25 to 50 per cent. The warmest friends of the schools soon had become greatly discouraged, and many of the teachers had left the State or had gone into other work. In 1871 the Legislature passed a law limiting the amount of local optional taxes for school purposes to one half of 1 per cent in rural communities and to three fourths of 1 per cent in towns and cities. Under these provisions not more than one in ten of the school districts throughout the State was able to support a school for a term of three months during the year.

Conditions went from bad to worse until May, 1874, when President Grant recognized Elisha Baxter as the legal governor of the State and ordered Brooks (Baxter's rival) and his followers to disperse.<sup>1</sup> A constitutional convention assembled in August of that year, and the constitution which it made was adopted by the

<sup>1</sup> The struggle between the two men, who represented the radical and the conservative forces of the State, is known as the "Brooks-Baxter War." Baxter was the conservative leader.

people the following October. In December, 1875, a new and improved school law was enacted under which the conservatives began their educational work. Sears regarded this as very favorable legislation and saw signs of renewed interest in education. Communities which had abandoned their public schools during the reconstruction period now began to reestablish them on a firmer basis, and the entire state system appeared to be "administered with great energy and to meet with popular sympathy." The number of schools which were able to comply with the requirements of the Peabody Board and which applied for aid from that source greatly increased, and the number of towns which were providing liberally for their schools was annually increasing. The Peabody Board also greatly assisted in stimulating interest in local taxation for schools and in arousing towns and cities to the importance of building school systems for all their children. Batesville, Camden, Fayetteville, Helena, Hot Springs, Little Rock, Springdale, Van Buren, and Washington were among the communities aided by the fund during the early years of its operation. Assistance was also given to normal schools, teachers' institutes, and the educational journal of the State. Between 1868 and 1877 the appropriations to the State were about \$60,000.

No schools were found in the rural sections of Florida in 1868. In the larger towns many families were contemplating sending their children to other sections of the country or moving elsewhere for better educational advantages. Wherever such conditions were found the general agent showed the people how money spent by a few families in such a way would support a good school for the children of the entire town. He made offers to Jacksonville, Tallahassee, St. Augustine, and other towns, and most of these communities soon met the requirements of the appropriations.

The school system established by the Legislature was feeble and greatly crippled because the funds for its support were inadequate. The state tax was not sufficient to maintain schools for two or three months a year, and the county tax was variable and uncertain. In many towns the schools were maintained by means



of private enterprise. Many of the Peabody appropriations were offered on the condition that private schools be converted into public free schools, and by 1871 many schools of private character were merged into public schools and made free to all the children of the community, and schools for both the white and the colored children were in this way provided. But the Legislature limited the amount of county school taxes, and the interest on the school fund was not being paid in currency but in paper worth only thirty-three cents on the dollar. Moreover, there were irregularities in many counties in the assessment and collection of the school taxes. The school population numbered about sixty-seven thousand, but only one fourth of it was enrolled in schools, and these continued for only a short term. However, aid from the Peabody Trustees did much "towards eradicating the prejudice formerly existing in the minds of many of the better classes against the system of free schools, and of some of the largest tax payers against the gratuitous education of all classes." But circumstances unfavorable to education continued for several years. The imperfect collection of revenue, the inadequacy of legislative appropriations, political conflicts, frequent changes in school officials, the incompetency of teachers, and the sparsity of population were among the obstacles which the schools encountered. Slight improvement began to appear, however, by 1878.

Florida was omitted from the benefits of the fund between 1885 and 1893. A part of the endowment consisted of certain Florida bonds which the State had refused to pay, and the matter of settlement became so vexatious that in 1885 the general agent was instructed to exclude it as a beneficiary of the fund. Eight years later, however, Florida was permitted to participate again in the appropriations. For similar reasons the same action was taken in the case of Mississippi.

Georgia participated very largely in the benefits of the fund in 1868 as a result of visits Sears had made the year before to numerous towns in the State. Atlanta, Macon, Augusta, Rome, Savannah, and Columbus were among the towns which met the

conditions of the fund and received assistance promptly. Sears also attended a meeting of the state teachers' association in Macon and later conferred with a committee appointed by that body to plan a school system for the State. In 1870 a uniform system of schools was introduced, but the law proved to be defective, and the members of the Legislature were reported as "much behind the general sentiment of the people on education." There was a serious lack of funds available for the schools because large amounts had been diverted from the original purpose. These reached nearly half a million dollars by the fall of 1871, and the following year the superintendent notified the counties not to expect any aid from the State for school purposes. As a result no public schools were maintained under the general school law of the State in 1872. A year later it was stated that the effort to establish a public-school system in Georgia "had resulted in comparative failure." Maladministration rather than the inherent weaknesses of the plan accounted for this failure.

In the towns and larger communities progress was being made by assistance from the Peabody Fund, and creditable school plans were in operation in many of them. Conditions were not altogether favorable in Atlanta, however, because the people objected to the local taxation necessary to provide schools for all the people. Private schools were therefore numerous, and sixty such schools, all charging high tuition rates, were reported in one year. The slowness of inaugurating the system previously planned for the city was due to the fear that the city charter did not allow the local tax. But legislative authority for this tax was later obtained, and a system of schools was soon put into operation with an experienced and progressive superintendent, seven large elementary schools (two of which were for colored children), two high schools, and fifty teachers.

In this and other towns of the State liberal efforts were made to educate the colored children. In some places there was no difference between the salaries of the white teachers and those of the colored teachers, and the colored schools were usually reported in

good condition. They operated on the same basis, were controlled by the same rules, and were taught the same length of time as the white schools. Most of the towns also provided normal training for all their teachers, being aided in such work by appropriations from the Peabody Board.

Most of the larger towns thus aided were soon able to maintain schools without much state assistance. But this was not the general condition throughout the State. As late as 1874 Sears said :

The State itself is somewhat feeble and faltering in its action. Whether it distrusts the principle incorporated in its laws, of educating the people at public expense, or is indifferent to the educational condition of the lower classes, the effect is the same, a deplorable state of popular ignorance.

Thirty-five per cent of the population over ten years of age was said to be unable to read and write. At the same time the agitation of the Civil Rights Bill in Congress had the effect of checking the growth of a favorable public opinion.

By 1875 the necessity for schools was being more widely felt and, although the State was not making the progress expected of it, extreme caution was beginning to yield to better counsels, and there was improvement in sight. A year later a decided advance in sentiment for public schools was noticeable. Many who were opposed to the system were becoming friendly ; many others who entertained grave doubts as to the policy of the system settled down into the conviction that it was the part of wisdom to give it a fair trial ; others who were hostile opposed with much less bitterness ; while the original friends of the cause were becoming every day strengthened in their favorable opinion and more earnest in its advocacy.

Louisiana probably suffered more from the evils of reconstruction than any other Southern State. Turmoil and confusion in political matters as well as morbid and unnatural educational conditions were some of the difficulties facing the schools. Education also suffered from the unwise constitutional legislative provisions

for mixed schools, from fraud and extravagance, and from vicious legislative whims. The constitution of 1868 provided that no separate school or institution of learning should be established in the State, and the same instrument prevented any municipal corporation from making any "rules or regulations contrary to the spirit and intention" of this mandate. The first school law was accordingly in strict conformity to the constitution, but the inexpediency and folly of such action were early and fully demonstrated by subsequent events in the State. Like the other Southern States Louisiana also suffered from an exploitation and fraudulent use of its school finances. In 1878 a legislative investigation showed that funds amounting to \$2,137,000 were misapplied during reconstruction, the responsibility of which attached to the various Legislatures and to the state officers, including the superintendent of schools and other local school officers. The same investigation gave as another potent reason for the abnormal school system of the State "the constant clinic treatment to which it has been subjected for eight years in the Legislative hospital."

On account of these conditions the Peabody Board was unable to coöperate with the state authorities until after the undoing of reconstruction. There was great excitement on the subject of mixed schools and uncertainty about future legislation. The white people were impoverished and disheartened and were being taxed for schools to which they were unwilling to send their children. For these reasons it was unsatisfactory to make arrangements with the state authorities, and it was regarded as undesirable to assist a class of schools not under the control of the State. The Board, therefore, began its work in Louisiana by giving attention to the training of future teachers. Practically all appropriations were made to support normal students in the Plaquemine Academy, in the New Orleans Normal School, and in other similar institutions. In a short time, however, plans were made to aid elementary schools for white children in several towns, through H. M. Lusher, a former state superintendent of Louisiana, who gave his services gratuitously to the Board. He usually appointed the trustees of



the schools receiving Peabody appropriations and recommended for aid those communities which supplemented such appropriations by local contributions. All such appropriations were administered for the exclusive benefit of white children, and against this apparent inequality of distribution Superintendent Thomas W. Conway appealed to Mr. Sears, who answered as follows:

I should be most happy to coöperate with the state authorities. But I understand that the state public schools are so organized that the greater part of the white population are unwilling to send their children to them, and that consequently, the benefit of the public money goes in fact chiefly to the colored children. If there is any feasible way of removing this inequality, bringing the white people generally into coöperation with you, the necessity for a local agency would cease, and we could act in concert with you.

We ourselves raise no question about mixed schools. We simply take the fact that the white children do not generally attend them without passing any judgment on the propriety or the impropriety of their course. We wish to promote universal education—to aid whole communities, if possible. If that cannot be, on account of peculiar circumstances, we must give the preference to those whose education is neglected. It is well known that we are helping the white children in Louisiana as being the more destitute, from the fact of their unwillingness to attend mixed schools. We should give the preference to colored children were they in like circumstances.

For many years the Board continued to act on the plan pursued when its work first began in the State and to use Mr. Lusher's voluntary services as local agent. As late as 1874 conditions had not changed appreciably, and the white people of the State were not taking any interest in the schools beyond paying their taxes. In New Orleans the Catholic schools were crowded with applicants from Protestant families, and private schools of all classes were greatly multiplied. In the country parishes only a few children were attending any school.

Dr. Sears feared that the work which his Board had done and was doing in the State was accomplishing but little good. The schools which had been aided were educating many children, but

instead of becoming stronger and giving promise of permanency they appeared to be declining. Finally, however, the general agent was able to say in 1877:

The period for which we have been anxiously waiting has at length arrived. A new system of public instruction more conformable to the feelings and habits of the people is already introduced. Our local agent has been re-elected state superintendent. The present prospect is that all classes of the people will unite in the work of education, and that there will be a pressing call on the Peabody Fund for assistance.

This proved to be a correct prediction, for during the next several years considerable aid was given the schools of the State. After 1877 the annual appropriations were considerably larger than before that time, and there were signs of growing sentiment in favor of schools.

When the general agent visited Mississippi soon after the work of the Peabody Board was begun, he found conditions there very similar to those in other Southern States, though the towns and cities showed more than ordinary interest in the work of the fund, and many communities were early aided by it. In some of these a wholesome educational sentiment was evident, in others the people were at first more or less indifferent on the subject of free public schools, and in others still they were "wedded to their private schools." Vicksburg all along seems to have maintained fairly adequate schools, with provisions for the children of both races; Natchez seems to have had a competent school board, excellent teachers, and large and commodious buildings and was attracting wide attention in the State. The school at Summit, which received aid during Dr. Sears's first visit, continued to prosper and exerted a powerful influence on the surrounding country. These are some instances reported by the general agent during the early years of his work in the State.

As noted in the preceding chapter, the public-school system was grafted on Mississippi after the Civil War, under new and unparalleled circumstances, by those who were not regarded by a

large part of its citizenship as fully identified with the best interests of the State. Confused political conditions and other evils of the period greatly hindered the development of proper educational sentiment and for many years retarded satisfactory educational growth. Much of the school money was paid during reconstruction in depreciated state and county warrants, and there was not ample means for school support. But the work of the Peabody Board was very effective, and by 1874 there appeared a promising interest in the question of public free schools for all the children of the State. Private schools were on the decrease, the number of towns supplementing the Peabody appropriations was increasing, and the friends of education were encouraged. In 1875 it was stated that the "taxes were cheerfully and promptly paid" and that attendance had increased as much as 20 per cent.

In 1876 Dr. Sears referred to the resignation of the state superintendent—against whom severe charges had been preferred—and stated that it had been necessary to explain anew the working of the Board to the new superintendent. The usual reaction also set in. The Legislature reduced the teachers' salaries, saying that they "should share with others the inconveniences of a depleted treasury." The feeling was general throughout reconstruction, however, that the school system needed to be revised and elevated, but it was not until the return to home rule that the friends of education saw some hope of improvement. In 1876 an administration of reform began, and the grounds of opposition to the schools were gradually removed; and two years later it was said that the great mass of the people of the State, without distinction of race or party, "are found the fast friends and supporters of the free-school system."

Mississippi continued to share in the benefits of the fund until 1885, when it was omitted from its distribution until 1893. This action the Board felt constrained to take "not as a punitive measure, but simply as a matter of justice to the children of other States, not to allow Mississippi to profit by her own wrong." The State had, by constitutional amendment, prohibited the redemption

or payment of certain bonds, amounting to about \$1,100,000, which were a part of the fund held by the Peabody Trustees. The State had paid the interest on these bonds until 1840; after that time only about \$100,000 was paid, and this was forced by *mandamus* proceedings. Various acts of the Legislature and the Supreme Court had confirmed the validity of the bonds. And when the fund was created Mr. Peabody believed "that at an early day such legislation will be had as to make these bonds available in increasing the usefulness of the present trust." He also believed that "Mississippi, though now depressed, is rich in agricultural resources, and cannot long disregard the moral obligation resting upon her to make provision for their payment."

In 1871 the Trustees memorialized the Legislature of the State to take proper action for redeeming the bonds, but they got no settlement. Ten years later they renewed the memorial without success. Meantime the constitution of the State was so amended as to exclude from legislative consideration the entire matter of settling the claims, and in 1882 Judge Thomas C. Manning—a Louisiana representative of the Trustees—went to Jackson and appealed to the Legislature, reminding that body that Mississippi had received nearly \$70,000 from the income of the Peabody Fund, while that endowment had received no income from the Mississippi bonds which it held. But the appeal was without effect, and after waiting for some time the Trustees in 1884 omitted the State from the distribution of the benefaction and continued to exclude it as a beneficiary until 1893, when it was reinstated. At the same time similar action applied to Florida, though the exclusion of these States as beneficiaries never had unanimous approval of the Peabody Trustees.

North Carolina was one of the first States to participate in the distribution of the income from this endowment. Acting on the advice of Calvin H. Wiley, former state superintendent of schools, Dr. Sears visited only the larger towns in 1868, where arrangements were more easily made for complying with the conditions of the fund. Applications for aid came from numerous private



academies, but these could not be considered. During that year the popular mind was greatly agitated over the ratification of the constitution, and the time was hardly opportune for the Board to do effective educational work. By April of the following year, however, a new school law was passed, and the Board was able to act as a stimulant in inducing towns and cities to establish schools. The new school system struggled through its first year with as much success as could have been expected in times of bitter party strife. Moreover, taxes were imperfectly collected, and the schools were therefore poorly supported. There was also a lack of educational interest, of competent teachers, and of competent officials.

In 1871 many discouraging conditions appeared in the State, where the public mind was not so well settled as in some other Southern States. The supreme court had decided that the school law, so far as it provided for local taxes, was unconstitutional and could not be enforced, and the Legislature had levied no school taxes for that year. Moreover, the county commissioners were using the capitation taxes for other than educational purposes. The principle of general education by public support had been agreed upon as the correct principle, but its application was proving a more difficult task. Educational legislation, though apparently well intended, had been hurriedly framed by lawmakers of little experience; local tax legislation was vague and uncertain and litigation was often resorted to by those who opposed it; and officials had but little interest in the schools, many of which languished for want of proper administration and supervision. But Dr. Sears continued his work with discretion and caution.

In 1873 conditions were still confusing, and indifference among the common people and a lack of coöperation among public men were everywhere noticeable. "Nowhere," said the general agent, "has it been more clearly demonstrated that half-measures in establishing and supporting public schools cannot be attended with great success." It was feared that in many if not in most of the counties no schools would open that year, and systematic and

energetic efforts seemed urgent to demand of the Legislature a working system of schools. The popular mind was also confused by the agitation in Congress of the Civil Rights Bill. Only in the cities and towns—and largely in those which were aided by the Peabody Board—were any serious efforts being made to maintain schools during those stormy days. The school law was very defective in that it failed to provide for the training of teachers and for county supervision and local taxation. In 1874 the superintendent said:

The people are not deficient in energy or public spirit, or in due appreciation of popular education. Our great want is *statesmen* in our legislative halls—laws that will permit the people to establish and maintain public schools for the education of their children. The want of active county superintendents has been greatly felt in administering the Peabody education fund.

In 1876 the state superintendent, who had been acting as the local agent of the Peabody Board, was charged with irregularities in the handling of appropriations made to the State, and a successor was tardily named in his place. This unfortunate circumstance greatly damaged the cause of schools. At this time the state tax for schools was slight, a local tax was hardly known, and the policy of appointing politicians to head the school system had revealed its weakness and danger. Offices had been needlessly created and unwisely distributed, and the school system was burdened with supernumeraries, responsibilities were divided, and chances of active official coöperation were greatly decreased. The unwarranted outside interference in educational matters, which was viewed with so much apprehension, also added difficulties. But the work of Dr. Sears and his Board, and the sight of success in the schools aided from that source, helped to keep alive a certain educational spirit, and appropriations continued to be made.

With the return to "home rule" in North Carolina, in 1876, and the adoption of a new constitution, conditions began to show some change. The liability of having mixed schools, which had been a

matter of much consideration to the people of the State, was now removed. Dr. Sears seemed much encouraged and said: "Public schools are now fairly put upon their own merits. There can henceforth be little question of their perpetuity, for the tide of public opinion has been recently turned and set so strong in their favor that it will not be easy to resist it."

One of the evidences of the change here predicted was the establishment of two normal schools (one for each race) for the training of teachers for the public schools of the State. A great need of reconstruction was for competent teachers, and the only safe method of providing them was through state establishment and support of normal schools. The Legislature of 1877, which established these schools, appropriated \$2000 for the support of each, and this appropriation was continued until other and better arrangements were made for teacher-training. The same Legislature granted authority to towns of a certain size to levy an extra property and capitation tax for school support.

South Carolina received from the Peabody Board during the first ten years of its operation about \$28,000, which was less than the appropriations to any other State except Texas during that time. Local conditions were in large measure responsible for this small share in the bounty. When the Confederacy collapsed there was little if anything which resembled civil power in the State. Local officers undertook to exercise their functions in an effort to maintain order, but conditions were so confusing that there was no power, save that of the United States Army, adequate to the protection of life and property, and until President Johnson named a provisional governor military authority alone existed in the State. This authority was of general scope, having jurisdiction where police regulations, the jury system, and other forms of governmental administration had hitherto operated. Instances of injustice were numerous, and the administration of military authority was harsh and its power frequently used in a most arbitrary fashion.

These discouraging conditions continued until 1865, when the presidential plan of restoring the Southern States was begun in

South Carolina. When the so-called military or congressional plan of reconstruction began in 1867 conditions were even more confusing than before. When the Peabody Board began its work there the same year "a more complete state of prostration as to all the means of education" had rarely been witnessed.

These desolate conditions were true of the State generally except in a few of the large towns where ante-bellum educational conditions were better and where efforts were made to maintain schools even during the darkest days of the period. In Charleston, for example, which was one of the first towns which Dr. Sears visited, the white school population numbered three thousand, and two thirds of the children were in school. The buildings were good, the schools well conducted, and there was an available school tax in the town of nearly \$20,000. Columbia, which was perhaps more desolated and broken up by the war than any other Southern city, was making courageous efforts to maintain schools. The white children of Anderson were without the means of education at that time, and only half of the white children in Greenville were in school. But in nearly every town which the general agent visited ample means were found for educating the colored children. Assistance was given to Anderson and Greenville as well as to most of the other towns visited, and aid was continued until the communities were able to maintain schools without outside assistance. Appropriations were also made to teachers' institutes and other forms of normal instruction and to the support of a state agent of the Board.

Complaints of unfaithfulness of state officials in the use of the school funds and of the incompetency and indifference of school officers were chronic during these years. The condition of the finances was deplorable, and the means of school support were both inadequate and uncertain. Teachers were frequently "compelled to toil on without receiving their hard-earned and scanty wages." In February, 1871, the teachers of Charleston had been without compensation for six months, and the city treasury was still empty. In other communities similar or worse conditions prevailed. Moreover,



the dominating power of the negro also added confusion, and public confidence was weakened by the diversion of school funds and by the failure of the State to make good its promises. These and other conditions greatly impeded the progress of common-school education in the State, produced evils which were not foreseen and which were difficult to correct, and created difficulties which made it practically impossible for the Peabody Board to accomplish as much as in some other States. Applications for assistance from the Board were few for most of the years between 1867 and 1876, but toward the close of that period Dr. Sears said of the State, "We are eagerly looking for such action on her part as will justify us in giving aid to a large number of schools; and measures have already been taken for this purpose, with good prospects of success."

When the Peabody Board first began its work in Tennessee there appeared an unsympathetic attitude toward public schools, funds for school purposes were inadequate, the teachers of the State were poorly prepared, and the educational situation there was described as "all-round inefficient." Political disorders had much to do with producing these conditions. Dr. Sears went to Nashville in the autumn of 1867, on invitation of the state superintendent, to appear before the Legislature and to address a meeting of the State Teachers' Association on the subject of organizing a state system of public education. His visit was productive of excellent and encouraging results. He also attended a meeting of teachers and county superintendents of East Tennessee at Knoxville, where he found the most prominent and influential people deeply interested in the matter of educational improvement.

— In 1870, however, a slight reaction set in, and the work of the schools was temporarily arrested by an act of the Legislature which substituted an inefficient county system of schools for the old one, and "three fourths of all the counties treated the matter of schools with utter neglect." The county courts alone had authority to levy a school tax, and aversion to taxation made it easy for them to neglect their duty in this respect. However, the numerous

places which continued to call on the Peabody Board for aid showed how disgusted the people were with inefficient legislation and how determined some of them were, even without aid from the State, to maintain a system of free schools until there was a law requiring them.

In 1872 the State Teachers' Association petitioned the Peabody Board for the expenses and salary of an agent to canvass the State in the interest of public schools. This association was composed of "enlightened and enterprising men, among whom were numbered the presidents and professors of the various literary institutions of the State." In January of that year an agent of the association was appointed and made assistant superintendent of public instruction. At this time the state system of schools was described as "utterly devoid of vitality." The work of this agent was so successful, however, that the association which he represented appointed a legislative committee to draft a better school law, and this was passed substantially as it was drafted. Through the State Teachers' Association, the *Journal of Education*, and the work of the teachers' institutes improvement in educational conditions began to appear again and public schools began to multiply. Through its Tennessee trustee, Judge Watson, and the governor of the State the Peabody Board proposed to the Legislature to establish a state normal school, and by joint action of the Trustees and the Legislature the literary department of the University of Nashville was converted into such an institution. Its first session began in December, 1875, with Eben S. Stearns as president. Temporary funds of \$12,000 a year were provided; one half of which was appropriated by the Peabody Board.

There was considerable evidence of reaction in the State, as in all the Southern States, after 1876. The Legislature of that year curtailed expenses as much as possible and greatly disappointed the friends of public education by failing to increase the school appropriations. "Necessity of reform in the State expenditures" was given as an explanation of this action. The Legislature also abolished the office of county superintendent, and only the veto of

the governor saved the office of state superintendent. The friends of education were sorely perplexed, and its enemies invariably joined that party which insisted on the strictest economy and sought by niggardly appropriations to jeopardize a system which they dared not openly assail. On this matter of reducing educational expenditures a fierce fight ensued not only in Tennessee but in practically all the Southern States.

The Peabody Board continued its work of aiding various communities in the State and of stimulating interest in multiplying and improving public schools. Normal instruction was also greatly stimulated. In 1878 nineteen scholarships, valued at \$200 each, were given to the Normal School at Nashville to be awarded to pupils outside Tennessee. This part of the work of the Peabody Fund gradually grew and proved of tremendous influence for many years. In the same year ten white and fifteen colored teachers' institutes were aided in Tennessee. For the ten years ending 1877 nearly \$200,000 was appropriated to the State by the Peabody Board.

Texas received from the Peabody Board during the first ten years of its work in the South less than \$19,000, which was the smallest sum appropriated to any State during that time. Afterwards, however, the annual appropriations increased, and by 1897 more than \$141,000 had been distributed in the State from that source. Mr. Peabody was anxious for work to begin in the State early, but the general agent did not visit it until 1869, and only \$1000 seems to have been appropriated there before 1874. The tide of immigration was greatly swelling from the Gulf States, from the Northern and Western States, and from almost every part of Europe. Many Germans were settling in the western part of the State, around San Antonio and Austin, and there was a rapid multiplication and growth of towns. Everywhere that Dr. Sears visited he found progressive and intelligent men who were eager for wise educational legislation. During his first visit there three different committees were appointed, "consisting of the most intelligent men, without distinction of party, to confer with the

Legislature on the subject of a system of public instruction." The general agent was also invited to address the Legislature the following April.

But the Board was unable to do any very effective work until the passage of a school law. In the spring of 1870 school legislation was enacted, but it was so impracticable that it was abandoned the following year. And there were other confusing conditions. The governor had nominated a state superintendent of schools, but the Senate refused to confirm the nomination, and the entire school system was thus rendered inoperative. No county seems to have undertaken to carry into effect the provisions of the law of 1870.

The following year a new school law was passed and provision was made for setting in operation a public-school system. All the machinery of the system was provided for, and the school fund, though badly plundered, was still larger than that of any other Southern State, amounting to more than \$2,285,000. But the schools were begun in the face of great opposition and during a period of fierce party strife. The originators of the law had little confidence in the people, and the people in turn were distrustful of the originators of the law and the school system. "One party wielded the law to overcome public sentiment; and the other wielded public sentiment to overcome the law." Complaints were made by both sides. The friends of the law and of the school system asserted that there was opposition, and the other side held that recklessness and extravagance had been practiced in public expenditures. Finally, the opposition prevailed, and additional school legislation was enacted.

A difference of opinion on public education continued. Some people believed that the public schools were abolished, while others contended that only the power to waste public funds was abolished. Whatever the fact, the schools suffered, and in 1873 Dr. Sears reported: "In the present unsettled state of school matters in Texas we should not be justified in making donations from our fund. We therefore feel obliged to wait till we can do it more in



accordance with our rules and usages." He here referred to requests from the state superintendent "to do something which our rules do not allow ; such as purchasing apparatus, paying teachers over and above their stipulated wages, and making up deficiencies in the school fund arising from neglect to collect the taxes legally assessed."

In 1874 conditions were more or less unchanged in the State, and the general agent said, "Time only will show whether vigorous measures will be taken to supply the great educational wants of the State." A year later a new constitution was framed for the State, and while it was defective, lacking a provision for a state superintendent, Dr. Sears reported "indications of a new movement." But he had not properly read the signs of the times, for in 1876 conditions were still confusing. Soon, however, an encouraging change appeared. Through a local agent of the Board many sections of the State had been visited, and there was a noticeable change in sentiment for public education. The press and the politicians declared themselves in favor of public schools, and denominational hostility to them, which had been a serious educational impediment, was decreasing. A new era began to dawn for the State, and the schools seemed to be prospering. In 1878 a state official said, "The system has taken such deep root in the popular mind that no fears need now be entertained for the future." After that time the annual appropriations were more numerous, and schools in many towns and communities were substantially assisted. The effect thus produced upon public sentiment was very marked and encouraging to the friends of public education.

Virginia shared more bountifully in the distribution of the fund than any other Southern State. Nearly \$18,000 came to the State in 1868 and 1869, before the school system created by the new constitution and the new school law had begun operation, and there were few years when its appropriations from that source were not larger than those made to any other State. This early and large participation in the distribution of the fund was not unlikely due

to the direct influence of the general agent, who, soon after his appointment, took up his residence at Staunton and thus came directly in touch with the educational interests of the State. Moreover, almost immediately on his arrival he was invited to address the constitutional convention in session in Richmond. The address set forth in a very convincing manner the principle of universal free schools. The convention ordered ten thousand copies of the address printed, and these were distributed broadcast throughout the State. In this way the purpose of the fund and the work of the general agent early came to be understood and appreciated in the State. Before the principal of the fund was finally distributed, in 1910, Virginia had received about \$400,000 from the bounty.

It was not the appropriations, however, which had the most beneficial influence in Virginia, nor was this the final result in any State aided by the Peabody Fund ; but as an incentive to local effort and community enterprise and, finally, as a stimulant to the development of local taxation for school support, the fund rendered its greatest and most lasting service. Moreover, it helped to create and sustain a healthy public opinion which expressed itself in legislative action. And Virginia, like all the Southern States, needed this stimulation. Like all the members of the late Confederacy, it was in a condition of almost hopeless impoverishment and destitution. Business had been demoralized in a manner unprecedented in history ; banks and corporations had been closed or temporarily suspended ; securities were valueless, and everywhere a condition of stagnation prevailed. In such conditions education was hardly expected to claim paramount attention ; other interests apparently as immediate and vital had first to be cared for. But through the work of the fund and the personal efforts of Dr. Sears attention gradually turned to the means of putting life and hope in the State through the development of a public-school system.

Dr. Sears found that most of the public leaders of the State believed that it would be wiser and more effective to employ the fund in preparing primary teachers than to use it in giving primary instruction to the children of the State. The general agent

himself believed that the education given in the colleges and other higher institutions of learning was sufficient to supply the more prosperous part of the population liberally with the means of schools, but provision for primary education appeared to him to be "very defective, and, in many places, can not be said to exist at all." The lack of competent primary teachers called for serious attention, and provision was immediately made for training twenty teachers in the Richmond Normal School, for ten or more teachers in Hollins Institute, and for ten teachers in Emory and Henry College.

In those towns where efforts were made to make appropriations for primary schools political questions were engrossing the public mind, and "the present was considered an inauspicious time for action." There was, however, no spirit of antagonism to the plans of the Peabody Board, "but a state of anxiety in regard to the future from which it was not easy, even temporarily, to divert the public mind." The spirit of uncertainty and of unrest seemed so disastrous to the cause of public education that the general agent was forced to move cautiously in his efforts to distribute funds to certain communities. Opposition to the new constitutions and a rather widespread fear that mixed schools would be forced on the people caused many writers and speakers to place themselves in a more or less doubtful attitude on the subject of public education.

The new school law was ratified in July, 1870, and efforts were made to set the school system in operation. The law took from towns and cities the power and authority to establish and control their own schools, however, and the state school funds were insufficient to maintain schools generally. But Dr. Sears and his Board continued to aid towns and villages and other educational enterprises, and in 1871 reported that thirty-nine white and thirty-three colored schools had received appropriations. The following year sentiment in favor of public education was growing, especially in the towns and cities, and there was an astonishingly sudden multiplication of schools in the State. Numerous communities continued to receive aid.

But for the perplexing question of mixed schools and the agitation in Congress of the Civil Rights Bill, educational conditions would have continued to show improvement. But the public mind was greatly agitated on the subject, and in many cases plans to build schoolhouses were abandoned and efforts at other improvements were suspended. In 1875 public education showed some improvement, though conditions were still very unwholesome. Liberal appropriations continued to be made to the State, however, and the larger towns were rapidly developing creditable public-school systems. By 1877 the conservatives were rapidly regaining control of the state government, and renewed attention began to be paid to education for the children of all the people. The general agent was himself very much pleased with the prospect, and said in his report for that year, "It has become quite evident that Virginia has not only settled her policy in regard to education, but entered upon a career of progress, which, in the next generation, will show its beneficent results in no ambiguous way."

Certain definite results of the fund appeared in practically all the Southern States. It stimulated local enterprise and community coöperation and promoted the establishment of city and town school systems; it encouraged the final establishment of complete state school systems; it helped to remove hostility to the education of the negro; it encouraged the professional training of teachers; and it tended to remove the bitter spirit of sectionalism.

The Peabody Board distributed in the South during the first decade of its work nearly a million dollars. This means nothing less than that the Southern States raised during that time for educational purposes by taxation or otherwise between two and three million dollars which otherwise would not have been available. Through this means sentiment for local taxation began, and the spirit of local effort which was thus stimulated gradually developed and rapidly spread throughout the South. After the undoing of reconstruction special legislative enactments generally gave towns and cities authority to place their schools on a more substantial financial basis, which enabled them to extend terms, enlarge



courses of study, and increase equipment and teaching forces. From this movement the town and city school systems of the South grew.

The final establishment of complete state systems of public schools was also aided by the policy of the Trustees and the personal efforts of the agents of the fund. Through public addresses, conferences with legislative committees, and consultations with public leaders Dr. Sears helped to make education appear as a function of government—a theory which was to become generally secure in the public mind. A property tax for purposes of education came finally to be regarded as legitimate and essential; opposition to this means of school support had been more traditional than rational. And the general movement for training teachers under state support and control and as a part of complete state school systems is easily traceable in its development and growth to the influence and aid of this benefaction.

Hostility to or prejudice against the idea of furnishing educational facilities to the freedmen was also somewhat diminished by the influence of the fund. To offer the children of the emancipated slaves educational advantages equal to those afforded the children of their late masters, in opposition to all tradition and custom, required a courage and a liberality that few men were thought to possess. And while some people slowly and with difficulty made the necessary adjustment, the general disposition on the part of representative Southern leaders to discriminate against the colored people was rarely seen. Cases of discrimination were the exception rather than the rule, for most of the leaders felt kindly toward the colored people until foolish ideas of unworthy teachers and of visionary and impassioned zealots created mischief and alarm among those who labored to preserve the integrity of Southern life. In spite of the confusion of the times and the vicious conditions and influences which made more difficult and delicate the problem of sympathetic racial coöperation, the Southern States paid nearly \$110,000,000 between 1870 and 1900 to help educate the negro. The apparent disparity in the number of schools for white and for

colored children during those years was due to the extreme difficulty and often impossibility of securing qualified teachers for the negro schools.

The promotion of normal school work for the training of teachers in the South was another important result of the fund. Adequate provision for the systematic training of teachers was early urged upon the States which the fund was aiding, because the lack of competent teachers was one of the chief obstacles to be surmounted in establishing public-school systems. In 1868 there was not a normal school in the entire South. Numerous "departments" were rapidly originated after the fund began to operate, but they were usually in denominational or private institutions, and rivalries and jealousies compelled the Peabody Board to confine its aid to such schools as were under state control. Soon, however, it began to devote a large portion of the annual income to stimulate the establishment and to aid the support of normal schools, and in this work the training of teachers was given considerable impetus. This course was pursued for several years.

The year following the establishment of the Nashville Normal College in 1875 the Peabody Board established a limited number of scholarships in that institution for students of ability in the beneficiary States. These scholarships were worth \$200 a year for two successive years. At first they were accepted with a degree of reluctance, but afterwards they were eagerly sought after, and by 1897 more than \$364,000 was distributed to the Southern States in this way. The school was established for the one purpose of training teachers for all the States, and its influence was far-reaching on education in that region.

In 1902 a movement was prompted by the alumni of the Nashville Normal College and the citizens of Nashville to establish in that city an institution for the higher professional education of teachers in the entire South. The movement was indorsed by the Peabody Board, which gave a large part of the fund for the establishment and endowment of the George Peabody College for Teachers. The institution was incorporated in 1909, and two

years later Dr. Bruce R. Payne was elected its president. The college opened in 1913 and is rendering a valuable service in the training of teachers in the Southern States. A part of the principal of the Peabody Fund was used also to encourage the establishment and maintenance of schools of education in state universities in the South.

While the trust was established primarily to help meet the educational needs of the South, Mr. Peabody clearly had in mind the promotion of the common good. "This I give to the suffering South for the good of the whole country" was the sentiment which he expressed when he made his second great donation in 1869. This benefaction of a Northern man, the caution and tact of his Trustees, and the activity of their efficient and able agents helped to remove much of the bitter sectionalism which was known generally to exist and to establish and maintain a bond of fellowship between the two sections so lately at war. Mr. Winthrop, for so long chairman of the board of Trustees, pronounced the gift "the earliest manifestation of a spirit of reconciliation toward those from whom we have been so unhappily alienated and against whom we of the North had been so recently arrayed in arms."

Since 1900 rather rapid advances have been made in extending educational facilities in the cities and towns. This extension has applied in considerable measure to the secondary or high school as well as to the elementary school. In general, however, the movement to extend high-school advantages to the children of the rural sections did not gain strength until more recent years, and even now much needs to be done before the equality of educational opportunity can be guaranteed to all the children of the South. The rise and growth of the public high school as a part of the state systems, and its present-day problems and needs, will be considered in a later chapter.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. What was the particular value of the Peabody Fund? What were its principal purposes?
2. Study the principles on which the fund was distributed and point out the value of each.
3. In what way or ways did appropriations from the fund aid education in your State? in your community?
4. Compare the principles on which the fund was distributed with the principles on which the income from the permanent public-school fund in your State was used before the Civil War.
5. Was it just to exclude Florida and Mississippi from the benefits of the fund between 1885 and 1893? Why? Why was this action of the Trustees not unanimous?
6. What final disposition was made of the principal of the fund?
7. Trace the development of town and city school systems in your State. Why has urban education advanced more rapidly than rural education?
8. How did the Peabody Fund stimulate local taxation in your State? In what way did it promote the training of teachers in your State? In what way or ways did it assist in advancing the education of the negro? How did the endowment aid in the establishment of public high schools?
9. Contrast the educational advantages offered in the cities of your State with those offered in the rural sections. Explain the inequalities that appear.

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## CHAPTER XII

### READJUSTMENT AND THE REAWAKENING

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. In spite of heroic efforts public education made only slight progress in the South between 1876 and 1900.

2. Poor economic conditions were the most immediate obstacle in the way of a more wholesome growth of schools.

3. Sparsity of population, isolation, the depressed condition of the people, the curse of politics, and the issue of mixed schools were other obstacles which retarded education.

4. As a result of these causes the public schools continued poor and defective throughout the quarter century.

5. Occasional signs of educational interest appeared here and there, however, during those years, but new foundations were necessary before substantial reform could be secured.

6. These foundations were finally made through increase in economic wealth, the rise of a strong middle class, the awakening of a class consciousness among the rural population, a new race of leaders, political changes, and legal requirements of literacy as a qualification for suffrage.

7. With the way thus prepared, the Conference for Education in the South, the Southern Education Board, and the General Education Board assisted in promoting active campaigns for better schools.

8. The spirit of reform was awakened, and remarkable progress was made in public education during the first decade of the present century.

Between 1876 and 1900 public education failed to develop and advance in the South as its champions had predicted. Heroic efforts at readjustment were made during those years, but the schools did not respond to the needs of the period, and educational improvement was very slow except in those towns and cities which had received assistance from the Peabody Fund, the work of

which was described in the preceding chapter. And even in those communities the growth of public education was not particularly marked, though the proof of their interest in schools was the gradual increase in their willingness to vote local taxes for public educational support. Outside the larger towns and cities, however, the condition of public schools was generally deplorable.

Reports of conditions at and immediately following the close of reconstruction had proved to be too optimistic, and the educational awakening which seemed to be at hand at that time was not achieved. The more creditable features of educational reorganization which seemed to appear during reconstruction were of unfortunate origin, and earnest efforts at reform and improvement soon became reactionary and in some parts of the South even served to pronounce the evil effects of radical rule between 1868 and 1876. For nearly twenty-five years following the undoing of reconstruction the iniquities of that period were felt in public education in all parts of the South, largely because the school systems which had been set up there bore, perhaps as no other part of the social system, the odium of bad control and partisan exploitation. Many evils thus produced continued to be felt until recent years and to retard the growth of public schools. In many parts of the South public educational facilities as late as 1900 suffered by comparison with those of 1860 or 1875.

Of the several causes which conspired to produce the unwholesome condition of public education the most immediate was economic. The greatest need of the period was more money for schools, and this need continued to be more or less acute until the recent past. Prior to 1900 the economic wealth of the South was not large. Very little accumulated property had been left by the war and that little had been wasted during reconstruction, and during the larger part of the quarter century which followed material development was not rapid. Public finances were in a perilous condition, the state treasuries were depleted, and credit abroad had not been thoroughly established. Agriculture was the principal occupation, and each crop was generally made by a

mortgage on itself. Everywhere there was widespread economic depression. The valuation of property was low, and standards of value varied widely in the various States and often in the counties of the same State. In some States the value of realty decreased during the first and second decades following the close of reconstruction, and personal property increased but slightly. The South was burdened with enormous debts which called for heavy interest payments. Moreover, unsound taxing systems inherited from reconstruction hampered state support of schools, and possible sources of local school support were often so hindered or entirely cut off by constitutional restrictions as to be ineffective. The reorganized permanent public-school funds of ante-bellum days were practically fruitless and remained so during the larger part of the quarter century.

Policies of rigid public economy were thus forced upon the South by necessity, and in such policies protection from relapses into the political and financial abuses of the past was sought as a check against plunder and incompetency in official position. The financial support of schools was very small, but generally as large as conditions permitted. But the school population and corresponding demands for enlarged school facilities were increasing; and lack of adequate school funds gave cheapness of instruction and economy in the maintenance and supervision of schools the color of creditable features of public education. The people of the South during these years were very poor,—too poor to afford the resulting waste of ignorance. They knew that their schools were poor, because they themselves were poor, but they had not yet learned that they were poor largely as a result of poor schools, or that their poverty was itself a convincing argument for better schools.

The sparsity of population and the isolation, the poor roads and the lack of other means of communication, were other difficulties in the way of a wholesome growth of public schools. Real rural progress depended then as now upon economic wealth and public willingness to use it for the advancement of public well-being. The

day of the building and maintenance of good roads had not yet come, modern and progressive methods of farming were not yet in use in the South, and rural life there was far from inviting and satisfying. Healthy spirit and interests in the school and community were impossible, therefore, because those activities which come with frequent social intercourse to quicken pride and public interest in community enterprises were not yet developed in the South. Because of the isolation and the unpromising social conditions thousands of people deserted the rural sections for better educational and social opportunity in the towns and cities.

Another difficulty in the way of a wholesome growth of public schools was the depressed and discouraged condition of the people themselves. It was noted in Chapter X that public confidence had been weakened by the unfitness of local school officers and the unfaithfulness of state officials and by the failure of the authorities to keep the promises made for schools. It was many years before confidence could be restored, and out of this distrust grew indifference and often outright hostility which prevailed for many years. The South also inherited defective educational legislation and unsound and unsuitable school organization from which it was difficult to escape. Moreover, the eight years' struggle for self-government in the Southern States, though culminating in revised constitutions and legislation, had at the same time consumed the greater part of the public energies. It had been a struggle for political existence, and education continued to be forced by the circumstances and conditions of the time into a neglect that was almost disastrous.

Largely as an outgrowth of that struggle the curse of politics was visited upon the schools and stood as still another stubborn obstacle full in the face of advancement. Its poison penetrated deeply. In policies of school support, in organization and administration, in supervision and control, its blight was so deadening that few features of public-school work escaped its ill effects. Unscrupulous men in office and local political bosses had been taught during the years following the war how to exploit the



schools to achieve partisan purposes. The lesson was so thoroughly learned at that time that for many years afterwards county and city school organization in almost every Southern State was in the grasp of the so-called "courthouse ring," which never hesitated to subordinate to political expediency the welfare of the schools; and these were often regarded as the spoils of political victory rather than places of public trust and opportunities for promoting public well-being. In many places the schools are not yet emancipated from the damaging influence or cured of this traditional ill, though the tendency is now somewhat more reassuring than formerly.

Another obstacle to public educational progress in the South had grown out of the issue of mixed schools, which had such a mischievous influence throughout the years of reconstruction. Viewed from the purpose or the result of that period the negro was the chief center of interest during that time. He was pitifully exploited and by those who loudly proclaimed themselves his friends. Since that time he has remained a disturbing element. For many years his presence retarded the advancement of schools and served also to lower political morals and to threaten political stagnation.

But it was not the fault of the negro that he was a social ill of such distressing proportions or that he stood so long in the way of educational progress. The curse of his ignorance, which had played into the hands of designing politicians during reconstruction, continued to make him a barrier to social advancement. The thoughtful white people of the South were friendly to him then, and since that time have been his best friends; they considered him educable for work, for improvement, and for useful citizenship. They knew that the right kind of school was the only safe remedy for his condition. And the effort which the white people of the South made to share their meager school funds for his education is one of the creditable commentaries on public educational thought in that section of the country.

As a result of these causes public schools in the South before 1900 were poor beyond comparison. In that year the annual

amount provided for each child of school age ranged from 50 cents in Alabama and North Carolina to \$1.46 in Florida and Texas, while the average for the United States was \$2.84. The annual amount raised for school support per adult ranged from \$2.65 in Alabama and North Carolina to \$6.37 in Texas, while the average for the country at large was \$10.93. The expenditure per pupil in average attendance varied from \$3.10 in Alabama to \$10.18 in Texas and \$10.25 in Florida.

The school term in 1900 varied from seventy days in North Carolina to one hundred and nineteen days in Louisiana and Virginia. The average for the entire South was less than one hundred days, while the average for the United States was approximately one hundred and forty-five days. The average monthly salary paid teachers in North Carolina and Alabama was only \$24, in Mississippi and Virginia it was \$32, and in Florida it was approximately \$34. Between 1860 and 1900 the average annual salary of teachers in the South decreased from \$175 to \$159. The average for the United States in the latter year was \$310. Not only were salaries low but in some cases the payment of them was uncertain. In South Carolina in the eighties the payment of teachers' salaries at the face value of the vouchers was regarded as a progressive step. Less than 60 per cent of the school population was enrolled in school and less than 40 per cent was in daily attendance. No Southern State had provided compulsory school-attendance legislation before 1900, though interest in the enactment of such laws was gradually revealing itself here and there. Only one pupil out of ten of those enrolled reached the fifth grade and only one in seventy reached the eighth grade. The burden of illiteracy in the various States was heavy. It ranged from 30 to 45 per cent of the total population, and the percentage of illiteracy among the white population was three times the average for the United States.

The per-capita expenditure for public education remained pitifully low throughout the period from 1875 to 1900 and provided only the most meager elementary educational facilities, and

in the country districts of the South almost no public high-school instruction was provided. The courses of study prescribed by the school laws in the various States had expanded, but the large number of poorly equipped teachers and the almost total lack of supervision rendered such courses chaotic and ineffective. The teachers often taught whatever their whims or fancies suggested or whatever they thought themselves best prepared to teach. Some of them did the best they could, but most of them merely "kept school." At best the schools were imperfectly graded, and as a rule the methods of teaching were deadening and wasteful. The schoolhouses (especially in the rural districts) were often log or dilapidated buildings without windows, desks, tables, maps, charts, or blackboards. Backless benches were frequently the only furniture or equipment found in most of them. The average value of rural schoolhouses in the South as late as 1900 was only about \$100. In view of the poor conditions which surrounded the schools it was fortunate that the term was short.

The conditions of administration and supervision of schools were likewise unwholesome. The state systems were rarely ever headed by educational statesmen. State superintendents were not selected for their professional training, vision, qualities of leadership, executive skill, or their genius for organization and administration. They were generally politicians, lawyers, soldiers, or patriots, and the conditions of the office usually made them little more than clerks, with short tenure of office. County superintendents were likewise deficient in professional training and ability, largely because of the method of selection, brief tenure, and low remuneration. They were usually unskilled in teaching, lacking in business ability, and uninterested, colorless, and uninspiring as leaders. The positions often went to briefless young lawyers, broken-down preachers, or to some other incompetent person as a reward for some political service. Definite qualifications for the county superintendent were not legally prescribed, and in some counties it was not expected that he should be educated. The failure to demand for the head of the state and county school systems

of the South recognized leaders in educational work—men of executive ability and professional skill—served to retard public-school progress, and its ill effects are felt today.

In district or local supervision and direction the school work was also defective. Each little school was left to itself, with no attention from state or county officials, and its own trustees were too often interested only in getting schoolhouses located near their homes or in employing their relatives or friends as teachers. It is not surprising, therefore, that the policy of multiplying schools by building a schoolhouse in every little neighborhood to satisfy the whim of some influential family was ruinous or that the examination of teachers was usually a mere standardless formality and often a farce. And nearly nine tenths of the children of the South were dependent for all the education they ever received on the rural schools, which were neglected in these and other ways.

As late as 1900 the public-school system of almost every Southern State was defective in these and other respects. About that time the state commissioner of Georgia described the school system of that State as "totally and radically inadequate," and loud complaints and stringent appeals for reform came from other States. The situation generally may be fairly well described by an excerpt from the report of the state superintendent of South Carolina in 1900:

It is a misnomer to say that we have a system of public schools. In the actual working of the great majority of the schools in this State, there is no system, no orderly organization. Each county supports its own schools with practically no help from the State as a whole. Each district has as poor schools as its people will tolerate, and in some districts anything will be tolerated. Each teacher works along in her own way, whatever that may be, almost uninfluenced by the existence of any other school or school authority. Isolation reigns. This is not inspiring or stimulating. . . . I am convinced that our educational system has certain fatal defects, and that all efforts at improvement must fail of substantial results until by the necessary legislation these defects are removed and the system is put on a sound and safe basis for growth and development.



Under the peculiarly discouraging conditions which confronted the people of the South during the quarter century here considered it is surprising that anything at all was done for schools. Belief in schools as essential to the welfare of the State prevailed as a theory, but serious interest in them was not wide and deep. In addition to the deadening influence of the obstacles already described, the conservative and aristocratic conception of education was somewhat strengthened by the new relations of the negro, and the so-called upper classes believed that the meager resources for school support were sufficient. The theory was strong among this element that the function of the State did not extend to public education; education at state expense was occasionally viewed as an invasion of parental obligation, and the theory that the State can levy on its property for public-school support was often attacked as unjust. These views were strengthened by the demand for policies of retrenchment in public expenditures and by the slogan of white supremacy. And the poorer people often refused to patronize the schools which were provided, largely because the inferior character of the advantages offered failed to command public respect.

Here and there throughout the South, however, signs of educational interest began to appear in the nineties. Prior to that time forward steps were occasionally undertaken, but only slight gains were made. Provisions for increased state and local funds were frequently urged and slight revisions in school legislation were made to that end, but they were usually discretionary and therefore inoperative. By special legislation and under certain restrictive conditions local taxes for school support were permitted in some States, but the general movement did not gain strength until after 1900. But the attitude generally held on this subject by the more enlightened leaders of the time was expressed by Superintendent John W. Abercrombie, of Alabama, in 1900:

Then, if our funds are not sufficiently large, what shall we do? Shall we fold our arms and wait until Alabama doubles in wealth? . . .

What we should do—what other States have done—what we must do, if we would properly qualify our people for citizenship, is to give to counties, townships, districts, and municipalities the power of taxation for educational purposes. If the people of any county, township, district, city or town desire to levy a tax upon their property to build a schoolhouse, or to supplement the state fund, for the purpose of educating their children, they should have the power to do it. The right of local self-government is a principle for which the Southern people, and especially the people of Alabama, have always contended; . . . yet, in the matter of providing for the education of our boys and girls, it is a right which the fundamental law of the State denies us. . . . There should be no limit, constitutional or statutory, general or local, to the power of the people who own property to tax themselves for the purpose of fitting the children of the State for intelligent and patriotic citizenship.

There was also a revival of the educational press, which advocated improvements in schools and other civic interests. The organization of the teachers in the various States, the formation of teachers' institutes and teachers' reading-circle work (though imperfect and unsatisfactory), and the rise and expansion of normal schools for the teachers of both races were other agencies which had helped measurably to awaken an educational consciousness and to stimulate effort against the apathy and reaction of the period. But no settled policies for progressive programs of public education were inaugurated; most attempts were sporadic, time-serving, political expedients which brought little permanent relief for the schools. New foundations were necessary before whole-hearted response could be made to a new impulse of educational reform, and such foundations were not laid until near the close of the century.

The incentive for educational reform depended first on a substantial increase in economic wealth, for without this the establishment of an adequate system of public schools was impossible. Before the deadening indifference and uncertainty of the period could be overcome the economic relapses of the war and the years following had first to be outgrown. Then and then only could the

people of the South turn their faces toward the future and begin seriously the work of restoring Southern life and institutions. Not until then were they courageous enough to study and face the facts as they were, to demand the truth concerning the schools, and to seek ways of improving them.

Economic recuperation had been very slow for many years, but in the early nineties it became more rapid. The production of cotton greatly increased, industrial interests of many kinds multiplied, large capital was invested in cotton manufacturing, railroad-building expanded, and progress was being made in other directions as well. During the last decade of the century the increase of wealth in the Southern States was nearly 50 per cent. This became the basis of substantial increases in school revenues and the foundation of a new attitude toward public education which began to make itself felt throughout the South after 1900.

With this increase in economic wealth there appeared a new and influential middle class, thrifty and prosperous and ambitious for and able to secure some part in public affairs. Prior to 1860 political power in the South had been monopolized largely by the landed and slaveholding classes, which represented also the supremacy in social and administrative ability. On account of the distinctions generally made by property qualifications for officeholding the masses had felt themselves deprived of their rightful places in the affairs of the State. The more prosperous classes and their property were considerably depleted by the devastation of the war, but the younger generation of them, largely because of their superior advantages, continued for several years after 1876 to occupy most of the places of public leadership. But through stimulation of service in the war and the challenge of an awakened democracy later, there gradually developed an upward movement among the masses. They were drawn more closely together and were led to seek through their ambition and industry and the unity of their civic heritage the means of opportunity for all. As the more capable and naturally ambitious of them became conscious of their power they sought participation in social and political activities.

They helped to secure a substantial response to the needs of the masses through their interest in an extension of public-school opportunities, which always becomes necessary as democracy becomes a reality.

In the "awakening of a class consciousness" among the people of the strictly rural sections of the South appeared another influence for improved school facilities. This expressed itself through such organizations as the Farmers' Alliance and the Grange, which often gave attention to schools and other civic agencies, as well as to purely economic interests. In resolutions on the subject they often insisted upon the necessity of education for the masses of the people. They believed that the uneducated people were "always at the mercy of the better informed" and urged that the members take more interest in the cause of public schools so that "the blessings of education" could be secured to their children.

Before the close of the nineteenth century there had developed also a generation of leaders in the South who were hopeful of the future. They believed that the Southern people were rapidly overcoming the financial and political results of the war and reconstruction and that the time had arrived for going forward. They knew that prosperity and well-being could be restored only by the establishment of schools and that the full development of the South depended upon the education of all the people. They viewed with impatience the educational weakness of the time and insisted that the truth about the schools be told. They attacked demagoguery and attempts to exploit the public mind with vain boasts and declarations of exaggerated achievements. So little had been done for schools and so much needed to be done that the opportunity for reform made strong appeal to these leaders, and they thus helped the South to gain a new sense of educational duty and to seek new and better ways of enlarging opportunities for all.

Another influence which gave impetus to the spirit of educational reform grew out of the radical political changes which marked the closing decade of the century. Numerous small political parties, such as the Union Labor Party in Arkansas and the



Young Men's Democracy in Louisiana, grew up and insisted on improved educational facilities. Another political party known as the People's Party, the Third Party, and the Populist Party developed organized strength in nearly every Southern State and in some instances made for a powerful and effective educational influence. Moreover, it soon became fashionable for all parties to pledge themselves to public-school support, and around 1900 the political platforms contained strong declarations in favor of that cause.

The race issue, which had checked the cause of public schools during and for two decades following reconstruction, was finally to serve also as a strong influence for educational progress. Through constitutional amendments literacy was recognized as essential to citizenship and required as a qualification for suffrage, applicable ultimately to both races. Disfranchisement of illiterates was in this way to have a beneficent influence on the educational life of the South. It placed a premium on education and drew sharp attention to the need for enlarged school facilities so that all the people, by education and training, could be fitted for intelligent citizenship. Education now became the issue of greatest importance. Happily for the cause of schools most of the States were fortunate in their leaders, many of whom had been called to positions of leadership by reason of their declared devotion to liberal educational policies. Among such leaders were Governor Aycock of North Carolina and Governor Montague of Virginia. The large place which education had come to occupy in the minds of such men and thousands of thoughtful followers may be seen from the inaugural address of Aycock in January, 1901:

On a hundred platforms, to half the voters of the State, in the late campaign, I pledged the State, its strength, its heart, its wealth, to universal education. I promised the illiterate poor man, bound to a life of toil and struggle and poverty, that life should be brighter for his boy and girl than it had been for him and the partner of his sorrows and joys. I pledged the wealth of the State to the education of his children. Men of wealth, representatives of great corporations,

applauded eagerly my declaration. I then realized that the strong desire which dominated me for the unlifting of the whole people moved not only my heart, but was likewise the hope and aspiration of those upon whom Fortune had smiled. . . . We are prospering as never before—our wealth increases, our industries multiply, our commerce extends, and among the owners of this wealth, this multiplying industry, this extending commerce, I have found no man who is unwilling to make the State stronger and better by liberal aid to the cause of education. Gentlemen of the Legislature, you will not have aught to fear when you make ample provision for the education of the whole people. . . . For my part I declare to you that it shall be my constant aim and effort, during the four years that I shall endeavor to serve the people of this State, to redeem this most solemn of all our pledges.

Here as in other States in the South advanced ground was in these ways won for the schools. Legislative appropriations for school support soon began to increase materially, provisions for state taxation began to be enlarged and made more nearly adequate, and policies of local taxation were inaugurated generally. Improvements slowly appeared also in the administration and direction of schools, and, finally, measures of further development came through compulsory-attendance laws which began to be enacted generally throughout the South. More attention was now to be claimed for schools than ever before, and public education was soon to be settled upon as the principal means of promoting real and lasting progress in a section which had so long lagged behind. By the opening of the new century a new era began to dawn.

These changes—increase in wealth, the appearance of an ambitious middle class and a new race of leaders, the awakening of class consciousness among the rural population, the political revolt, and the elimination of the race issue in politics—prepared the way for effective educational advance.<sup>1</sup> But there was need for organized agencies to carry on educational propaganda so as to acquaint the people with actual conditions and needs and lead them to a new public-school idea.

<sup>1</sup> Boyd, "Some Phases of Educational History in the South since 1865," in "Studies in Southern History and Politics." New York, 1914.

This need was to be met in large part by the work which developed from the Conference for Education in the South,<sup>1</sup> which grew out of a personal conference of men and women of the North and the South at Capon Springs, West Virginia, in the summer of 1898, known as the Conference for Christian Education in the South. The meeting was small in attendance, but it touched a note of reality and need which gave its future work wide significance and lasting effectiveness. At the second meeting the name was changed to the Conference for Education in the South. The second and third conferences were held at the same place in the summers of 1899 and 1900, and succeeding meetings were held in Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Athens, Georgia; Richmond, Virginia; Birmingham, Alabama; Columbia, South Carolina; Lexington, Kentucky; Pinehurst, North Carolina; Memphis, Tennessee; and in other places. Dr. T. U. Dudley of Kentucky presided over the first conference, Dr. J. L. M. Curry, agent of the Peabody and the Slater Boards, presided over the second, and at the third conference Mr. Robert C. Ogden of New York was elected president and served in that position for several years. To his generous enterprise, resourcefulness, and administrative wisdom much of the success of the movement was due. For many years he invited numerous people in the North who were interested in education to attend these annual meetings as his guests, and for their accommodation he provided special trains. In this way influential people of the North became acquainted with those of congenial spirit in the South and thus gained a safer knowledge of Southern life, its perplexing conditions, and its pressing needs. At the instance of the Conference for Education in the South the Southern Education Board was organized in 1901 for further educational service. A year later the General Education Board was formed with the purpose of wise and systematic coöperation with the Southern Education Board, and its services to education in the South have been large and varied.

<sup>1</sup>This was also known as the Southern Conference Movement, the Southern Educational Movement, and the Odgen Movement.

Extensive and systematic field work was planned with Dr. J. L. M. Curry as supervising director and President Edwin A. Alderman of Tulane University, President Charles D. McIver of the North Carolina Normal and Industrial College, and President H. B. Frissel of Hampton Institute, Virginia, as district directors. President C. W. Dabney of the University of Tennessee was named as the chief of the bureau of investigation, information, and publication. The services of Professor P. P. Claxton of the University of Tennessee and Professor J. D. Eggleston, Jr., of Virginia were secured for the bureau of publicity which was established at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The plans and purposes of the novel educational campaign thus begun met with the hearty indorsement of the press of the Southern States and with the practical support and assistance of the leading people at that time engaged in school work in the South. Able advocates of better schools came forward promptly and enlisted their services in the movement. The work and method of the campaigns which followed may be seen from the following description:<sup>1</sup>

Presidents and professors in the universities and colleges, lawyers, business men, and holders of office—the friends of progress and the molders of popular opinion were quick to see their opportunity and to improve it. The most practical school questions came up for discussion: local questions and those more general; better buildings and a higher grade of teaching for the particular community; improved legislation, wiser taxation, larger appropriations, and more efficient administration of the entire educational system of the State. People gathered in mass meetings at their court-houses, in churches, and in public halls, in the city and in the country alike, to hear men talk on education, to listen intently to discussions about the improvement of their children's schooling. Larger numbers came out to these gatherings than to any others. Political orators and spellbinders in a political campaign failed to secure the attendance or to arouse the enthusiasm of

<sup>1</sup>Dickerman, "The Conference for Education in the South and the Southern Education Board," in Report of the United States Commissioner of Education (1907), Vol. I.



these college presidents, superintendents, and school teachers, who came with their message of a brighter hope and a higher service for the children.

The sweep and power of this movement appeared in the Sixth Conference, in 1903, at Richmond. Many of the speakers came there directly from the campaign work in which they had been engaged in different parts of the South, from Virginia, from the Carolinas, from Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana, and their addresses in some cases were partly the same which they had used with the people of their respective States. This event was like the focalization of the best thought and feeling now coming into vigorous expression everywhere. A comparison of the Richmond meeting with the last one at Capon Springs three years before shows how fast things had been moving. At Capon Springs there was an attendance of forty-four, and two-thirds of these were either Northern people or people of Northern antecedents; of the fourteen who were wholly of the South, one was from Kentucky, one from Georgia, and all the others from Virginia. There was not a superintendent of schools present, not one—state superintendent or county superintendent. Of the great schools founded and maintained by Southern people, several were represented by delegates of great influence, but all of these were from the one State of Virginia. Nor was the press of the South any better represented; only the editor of one paper was there. The meeting was significant; it dealt with a great subject, and it took into view great movements that were surely on their way, but it was unknown through the South. Three years later, at Richmond, only about 150 miles from the former place of gathering, how different it was! The whole South knew of that meeting, and the South was there with representatives of its noblest educational institutions.

At this meeting also there was a more representative attendance of people from the North than had been seen at any similar gathering on Southern soil. One reason for this was the place of holding the Conference, Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. With the spread of a national spirit, rising superior to sectional considerations in all parts of the country, this historic city had an attractiveness peculiarly its own for the purpose designed. Of all centers of influence and of inspiring associations for the South, this was foremost, this the metropolis from which most effectively and fittingly might radiate the forces of a higher educational life.

The work of these unusual agencies had a powerful and practical influence on educational development in the Southern States, especially in serving to promote active campaigns for better public schools. Such campaigns were carried on in North Carolina in 1902, in Virginia in 1903, in Georgia and Tennessee in 1904, in South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi in 1905, and in Arkansas and Florida in 1908. Some of them continued for several years, with very fruitful results.

In many States the educational provisions of the constitutions and laws were revised and improved. Throughout the South generally improvement appeared in many ways. In less than a decade school revenue increased more than 100 per cent and in some States the increase was nearly 200 per cent. The value of rural schoolhouses showed a large increase, and there was marked improvement in enrollment and attendance. Illiteracy decreased from 27 per cent to 18 per cent, local taxes multiplied, and the school term grew from 96.9 days in 1900 to 121.7 days ten years later.

Teachers' salaries increased considerably in comparison with those paid in 1900, though in most States they were much lower than in other parts of the country. Progress was made in the work of training prospective teachers through state-supported normal schools, which increased in most of the States, and departments of education, which were established in all the leading institutions of higher learning in the South. Schools of education were formed in the state universities and numerous courses offered for the professional training of school administrators, high-school principals, and teachers. Teacher-training classes in high schools of standard grade also made a beginning, facilities for the training of teachers in service increased, and the certification of teachers, which had not developed in the South before 1900, after that date showed hopeful signs of improvement. This important work was not promptly put on a sound basis in all the States, however, and in many of them there is still much to be done before the professionalization of public-school teachers can be secured.

As a result of the revival movement in public education impetus was also given to high schools, which began to be established in the rural communities and as a part of the state school system. New interest was also given to consolidating the small rural schools into larger graded schools with improved equipment and better teachers, to vitalizing the courses of study of both the elementary and the high schools through correlation of the work with the life of the people, to establishing rural libraries, to organizing school-improvement leagues and parent-teachers' associations, to improving supervision through a better type of county superintendent, and to enacting better compulsory-attendance and child-labor laws.

It is said that when Santa Anna was captured on San Jacinto he asked Houston how he was able with so small a force to win such a complete and signal victory. Drawing from his pocket an ear of corn Houston is said to have replied, "When patriots fight on such rations as this, they are unconquerable." It was this kind of spirit which enabled the people of the South, after more than a quarter of a century of difficulties and discouragement, to begin the important enterprise of building schools for the proper education of their children. Many of those difficulties were stubborn and mischievous and stood for years as a deadly upas to enfeeble and obstruct wholesome social growth, but they were finally overcome by the heroic effort and indomitable courage of those men and women who looked forward and not back and who stood pledged to the education of the sons and daughters of the South.

A beginning was thus made, but, important as it was, it can be looked upon now as no more than a beginning. From that start, however, the principle of universal education has found wide acceptance, and its application has greatly advanced in the South since the awakening. But the equality of educational opportunity has not yet been practically guaranteed to all the children in the South, although progress is being made in that direction. The progress and the present tendencies and tasks of the public schools will be considered in the next chapter.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Study the educational progress of your State between 1876 and 1900 as shown by expenditures, enrollment, attendance, qualifications of teachers, physical equipment of the schools, length of school term, courses of study, and facilities for high-school instruction.

2. Study the development of the economic wealth of your State in recent years for relations between it and increased school taxes.

3. Do you agree with the statement in this chapter that the poverty-stricken condition of the South was the principal cause of its educational backwardness prior to 1900?

4. Account for the fact that in many parts of the South public educational conditions were less promising in the nineties than in 1876.

5. Study (*a*) provisions for training, examining, and certifying teachers, (*b*) growth of educational journalism, (*c*) child-labor and compulsory-attendance laws, (*d*) courses of study and methods of adopting textbooks, (*e*) regulations controlling the building and equipping of schoolhouses, (*f*) consolidation of schools, (*g*) provisions for local school taxes, (*h*) qualifications of state and county superintendents in your State between 1876 and 1900.

6. Study the Conference for Education in the South for educational influences in your State. Who were the leaders of the movement in your State?

7. Why is the willingness to vote local taxes for schools a good measure of a community's educational interest? Why was local-tax sentiment so slow to develop in the South? What limit, if any, should there be to the power of the people to tax themselves for schools?

8. List the principal incentives or causes of the educational awakening in your State.

9. Should an illiterate person be allowed to vote? Why?

10. What was the decrease in illiteracy in your State between 1900 and 1910? between 1910 and 1920? What is the extent of illiteracy in your State now?

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## CHAPTER XIII

### THE PRESENT SYSTEM: ITS TASKS AND TENDENCIES

*Outline of the chapter.* 1. As a result of the reform movement considerable progress has recently been made in urban education, but the rural schools have responded slowly, and the result is that the Southern States still rank low in public education.

2. Their present low educational position is explained by such facts as the scarcity of funds, the dual system required, the scattered school population, and the low property values which have hitherto prevailed generally in the South.

3. The present administrative organization of public education in the South corresponds in the main to that found in other sections of the country, with the tendency to improvement in state and county support and administration, courses of study, child labor, public welfare, compulsory attendance, and health regulations.

4. Efforts are being made to eliminate adult illiteracy and to provide more adequate instruction and training in citizenship and in agricultural and industrial subjects. Hopeful signs of progress also appear in the movement to improve the status of the teacher.

5. Further improvements are needed, however, in state and county organization, support, and supervision, in the enrichment of the curriculum, in more intelligent and sympathetic attention to the education of the negro, and in making provision for more nearly adequate facilities for education in the rural sections of the South.

6. Intelligent consolidation offers the most effective solution of the rural-school problem and the surest improvement of rural-life conditions.

7. This improvement will come through leadership and the willingness of the people to use the increasing economic wealth for the promotion of public well-being.

The impulse of reform and improvement which developed from the awakening described in the preceding chapter continued to be so widely felt that the past decade became one of marked growth

for public education in the South. With the exception of the temporary interruption and confusion of the World War, which has finally served to quicken educational interest, improvement has been steady, and the principle of universal education has gradually gained strength. The decade just closing has witnessed large increases in the financial support of education and improvements in general educational legislation, in the facilities for training and certificating teachers, in the physical equipment of schools, in the courses of study and methods of teaching, and in compulsory-attendance, child-labor, and public-welfare legislation. The movement for the consolidation of rural schools and the enrichment of rural life has gained slight momentum, rural high schools have slowly increased, and the general tendency has been toward improvement in organization, administration, and supervision.

As a result of recent progress schools in the towns and cities of the South now compare favorably with urban schools in other sections of the country. But corresponding progress has not been witnessed in the rural schools; and in spite of the general improvement made possible since 1900, the rural sections of the South have not responded to the full influence of the advance movement. But this failure to respond is not difficult to understand. That movement has been most clearly felt in the larger communities, where the principle of coöperation has been most intelligently applied in the solution of common questions and in the promotion of common interests. In such communities coöperative effort has been effective not only in such enterprises as the building of streets and of lighting, water, and sewerage systems but in the establishment and maintenance of public educational facilities for all the children. Similar lessons in coöperation have not yet been fully learned nor are they appreciated in the rural and sparsely settled sections. This fact helps in large measure to explain the lack of adequate school facilities for the country children and the fact that the Southern States still stand near the bottom of the list of their sister States in provisions made for financing, directing, and developing adequate public educational work.

According to a recent careful study of public education in the United States,<sup>1</sup> the Southern States rank low among the other States, the District of Columbia, and the three American possessions outside of continental United States—Hawaii, Porto Rico, and the Canal Zone. The percentage of efficiency of the public-school system in each State was given for stated periods from 1890 to 1918 by applying ten tests to each State as follows:

1. The number of children of school age attending school.
2. The number of days each child of school age attended school.
3. The number of days the schools were kept open.
4. The number of children of school age in high schools.
5. The number of boys as compared with the number of girls in high schools.
6. The average annual expenditure per child attending.
7. The average annual expenditure per child of school age.
8. The average annual expenditure per teacher employed.
9. The expenditure per pupil for purposes other than teachers' salaries.
10. The expenditure per teacher for salaries.

The results found for the eleven Southern States may be viewed from the table on the next page. For 1890, 1900, and 1910 the rank of each State is given with reference to all the States (or territories which later became States) and the District of Columbia—in all, forty-nine units. For 1918 the rank is with reference to the forty-eight States. It will be seen that Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia lost ground, that Louisiana, South Carolina, and Tennessee held their own, and that Georgia was the only State in the South to gain, during the decade from 1890 to 1900.

The average length of school term for the United States in 1917-1918 was 161 days, while the average for the South was 131 days. Of the Southern States Texas had the longest term, with 146 days,

<sup>1</sup> Ayres, *An Index Number for State School Systems*. Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1920.



and South Carolina the shortest, with 113 days. In that year a little more than 25 per cent of the school term of the United States was wasted as a result of nonattendance. The waste of the school term in the Southern States was slightly above 33 per cent. The expenditures for public-school education in the South that year amounted to about \$86,000,000, but one third of that amount was spent for the maintenance of schools which the children did not attend. In this fact is proof of the need for more adequate child-labor and compulsory-attendance laws in the Southern States.

	1890	1900	1910	1918
Alabama . . . . .	44th	48th	45th	45th
Arkansas . . . . .	42d	45th	46th	46th
Florida . . . . .	29th	40th	42d	37th
Georgia . . . . .	46th	44th	44th	43d
Louisiana . . . . .	43d	43d	39th	42d
Mississippi . . . . .	39th	46th	47th	47th
North Carolina . . . . .	45th	49th	48th	44th
South Carolina . . . . .	47th	47th	49th	48th
Tennessee . . . . .	41st	41st	43d	40th
Texas . . . . .	36th	38th	37th	36th
Virginia . . . . .	38th	42d	41st	43d

Although the South since 1900 has paid increasing attention to secondary education, the development of rural high schools has not kept pace with the growth and improvement of high schools in the urban communities; and in many counties throughout the South not a single standard public four-year high school has yet been established. The striking inequality in secondary educational opportunity offered in other sections and in the South appears in the fact that the average number of the school population enrolled in high schools in the United States in 1917-1918 was 9.3 per cent, while the average for the Southern States was only 5.1 per cent. Of the Southern States Texas showed the largest number of the school population in high schools, with 9.6 per cent, and South Carolina showed the smallest, with 2.2 per cent.

The condition of teachers' salaries throughout the country has greatly improved during the past few years. In some of the Southern States the increases have been very substantial, but the average annual salary paid public elementary and secondary school-teachers in the South is only three fifths of the average for the United States. This is one reason, though not always the principal one, why the schoolroom does not attract the most capable and promising young people.

Certain other facts concerning public education in the South have significance. Careful estimates show that more than 15 per cent of the rural and small-village teachers in these States have had only an elementary-school training. Ten per cent have had only one year, about 18 per cent have had two years, 19 per cent three years, and 40 per cent four years in high schools. Less than 5 per cent have had college training, and more than 60 per cent have had no definite professional training. Twenty-five per cent are teaching for the first time, and less than 8 per cent have had as much as eight years' experience. Fully 25 per cent intend to quit the schoolroom after temporary service, largely because of insanitary teaching and living conditions, loneliness and the lack of wholesome social interests in isolated communities, low salaries, and the discovery of their unfitness to teach. It is a significant fact also that male teachers are constantly decreasing in the elementary schools, in some sections almost to the point of disappearance. Under these conditions evils are inevitable. Effective instruction of the children is impossible, proper grading of the schools cannot be made, the usefulness of the teacher in the school and community is limited, no chance is afforded for the development of the professional spirit of the teacher, certificating standards are kept low, and education generally is held in low esteem by the public. Moreover, the work of normal schools is regarded with indifference—in many instances actually wasted—when their energies are expended on teachers who have such brief and uncertain tenure.

In the South, as elsewhere in this country, there has never been an adequate supply of adequately trained teachers, but the

problem of meeting this condition now is particularly difficult. The poor pay of teachers helps to give them an indifferent social status in the community. Moreover, the examination and certification practices in most of the Southern States still serve to admit to the profession a great many immature and poorly trained teachers who help to keep out many of the more capable ones. Public-school teaching in the South has not yet been stabilized and professionalized, and the supply of creditable normal schools and teacher-training agencies is so inadequate that the annual supply of properly trained teachers meets only a small part of the demand. An increase in normal schools, departments and schools of education in colleges and universities, and teacher-training classes in high schools is, therefore, greatly needed if public education in the South is to develop properly. Without a sufficient number of these agencies no State can expect to secure and retain any large number of well-trained teachers. But any number of such agencies will not produce the class of teachers that is needed unless, by improved living conditions, larger salaries, and increased professional requirements, the opportunities offered in teaching, especially in the rural schools, are equal to or approach the opportunities found in other occupations.

Certain conditions help to explain the South's present low educational position among the other States. The Southern States, with limited funds, have had to provide two systems of education for large numbers of children scattered over wide areas. They have relatively greater numbers of children to educate than other sections of the country; in each of them the number of school children exceeds the number of adult males, on whom rest the burdens of supporting the public schools. For every thousand adult males in these eleven States there are 1279 children of school age for whom public education must be provided. Georgia must provide for 1343, Alabama for 1323, Mississippi for 1370, North Carolina for 1401, and South Carolina, which is the most prolific State in the Union, for 1510 children for each thousand adult males. In eleven representative Northern States the corresponding average is

789 children, and in a similar number of typical Western States the average is about 600 children for each thousand male adults.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, property values in the Southern States are less per capita than elsewhere in the Union. The estimated average true value of all property for each child of school age in the South is approximately one third that of the Northern States and one fourth that of the Western States. Added to these difficulties is the disadvantage of the sparsity of population in the South. This condition developed from the predominating industry of agriculture, which has never been of the intensive type. North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia are the only Southern States with an average of more than ten white children of school age to the square mile. Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina show an average of between eight and nine, Arkansas and Mississippi between six and eight, Texas less than five, and Florida only three children to the square mile of territory. No Southern State has an average of ten colored school children to the square mile; the largest number are found in South Carolina and the smallest in Texas. And throughout the South the policy of separate schools for the children of the two races is accepted as permanent. In some of the Northern States the average density of school population is from three to ten times greater than that of the South, and the average for the eleven representative Northern States, which generally maintain only one system of schools for all children, is about three times that of the Southern States. In the Western States the school population is small, but the population is largely concentrated in the irrigated regions, river valleys, and mining towns and is not so widely distributed as in the South. The meaning of this comparison for the adequate and effective organization, supervision, and support of schools in the South is too obvious to require comment.

The administrative organization of public education in the South is similar in the main to that found in other sections of

<sup>1</sup> The school age here used is from five to eighteen years. See *School Life* for July 1, 1920.



the country. For some time there has been a distinct tendency throughout the United States to make improvements in the composition of state boards of education by replacing ex-officio boards, or boards made up of other state officers, with members selected from the people. But this tendency has not made much progress in the South. Of the nine States in the Union which still retain the ex-officio state boards of education four are Southern States,—Texas, Florida, Mississippi, and North Carolina,—and appointive members of such boards predominate in Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Each of the States of Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina has, in addition to the general state board of education, a special board for administering vocational education. All the Southern States except Tennessee continue to elect their superintendents of schools by popular vote for terms of from two to four years. In Tennessee that officer is appointed by the governor for two years. In comparison with the salaries paid in many other States, the annual salaries of the state superintendents in the South are very low.<sup>1</sup>

In seven of these States county boards of education are elected by popular vote. In Georgia such boards are elected by the county grand juries and in South Carolina by the state board of education. In Mississippi the county board is chosen by the county superintendent, who is its chairman. In Virginia the county superintendent, the county judge, and the commonwealth attorney form a trustee electoral board which selects three trustees for each school district in the county, and these trustees and the superintendent form the county school board. County superintendents of schools are elected by popular vote in Texas, Florida, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Georgia and are appointed by the county boards in North Carolina, Arkansas, Louisiana, and Alabama, by the county courts (fiscal bodies) in Tennessee, and by the state board of education in Virginia. The term of the county superintendents in most of the Southern States is from two or four years. In theory the

<sup>1</sup>South Carolina pays \$2400, Arkansas \$2500, Alabama \$3000, and the other States from \$3600 to \$5000.

county is the unit of local school administration, somewhat strong and effective in some States and weak in others; in actual practice, however, the district is still the local unit and is left with certain functions, though there is a hopeful tendency toward the adoption of the county as the logical and most effective unit for the direction and support of public schools.

During the past decade the financial support of public education has largely increased, and at the present time there is a marked tendency to advance tax rates for school purposes and to shift the burden from the smaller, weaker units to the larger unit of the county or the State. This tendency reveals the conscious effort to make educational opportunity more nearly equal for all the children. To this end school laws have been amended in almost every Southern State during the past two or three years, state constitutions have been revised, legislative appropriations have been more generous, and more liberal taxation provisions have been allowed county and district units. In these actions is found the recognition of the inability of the weak communities to make proper provision for schools unless aided by stronger units, and another step is thus taken toward acceptance of the principle that the burden of public education must be largely taken by the State as a whole. Of significance in this connection is the intelligent manner in which certain of the States have recently approached these administrative problems by the creation of expert commissions to study and report on educational conditions. Among such States are Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Virginia.

With the enactment of a compulsory-attendance law in Mississippi in 1918 the last of the Southern States became committed to the policy of requiring children between certain ages to attend school for all or some part of the school term. The compulsory-attendance movement began in the South in 1905 with the passage of initial legislation on the subject in Tennessee; continued with North Carolina in 1907, Virginia in 1908, Arkansas in 1909, Louisiana in 1910, South Carolina, Texas, Florida, and Alabama

in 1915, Georgia in 1916; and ended with Mississippi in 1918.<sup>1</sup> Revisions, extensions, and improvements have been made in some of the States since the introductory enactments. Now the principal problem of attendance legislation is that of further extension and wider application so as to make such laws more effective by securing the support of public favor.

From the facts presented elsewhere in this chapter concerning nonattendance of school children in the South it is evident that compulsory-attendance laws are not only very defective but that they have not yet secured—perhaps largely because of their defects—the full force of public approval which is needed for their complete success. For example, the recently enacted law of Mississippi is applicable in a county or district only after it has been approved by the qualified voters therein, and then attendance for only sixty days a year is required of children between the ages of seven and fourteen. In 1918 Florida, Mississippi, and South Carolina were the only three States in the Union which did not have state-wide compulsory school laws.

All the Southern States have some form of child-labor legislation, theoretically in close relation to the compulsory-attendance laws, but in many of the States reform is needed here also. A few of the States have made small beginnings in legislation and practices designed to safeguard and protect dependent and delinquent children. In most of the States, however, only the beginnings of this important work have been made. The most advanced and complete plan to be found, not only in the South but in the country at large, is that set up by legislation in North Carolina in 1919. This is the county-unit plan, which provides for county boards of public welfare and a juvenile court in every county with jurisdiction over all delinquent, neglected, and

<sup>1</sup> The first compulsory school law, as used in this connection, was enacted in Massachusetts in 1852, and the movement extended over a period of sixty-six years before the forty-eight States were included in it. The Southern States were the last to act. See page 10 of *Bulletin No. 2* (1914), and page 26 of *Bulletin No. 13* (1919), of the United States Bureau of Education.

dependent children under sixteen years of age, and requires the appointment of a paid superintendent of public welfare in every county to serve as chief county school-attendance officer and probation officer. The operation of this system has already attracted wide attention for its intelligent attempts to coördinate and direct all public agencies which pertain to the general social welfare of the people.

Important results of compulsory, child-labor, and public-welfare laws are the new burdens which they place on the school and the change in the attitude of the public and the school toward truants, incorrigibles, defectives, dependents, and delinquents. These were formerly neglected or dismissed. Now attempts are made to correct, protect, improve, and train them as far as possible for personal and social usefulness. But these increased burdens on the school carry with them enlarged opportunities which the school of a few years ago never had.

The administration of the Selective Service Act during the war served to draw sharp attention to our public educational weaknesses and defects. Thousands of men were found to be so physically defective as to be unfit for military service. Of the 2,510,726 Americans examined in the first draft, the surgeons rejected 730,756 on account of physical disability. Many of the disqualifying defects of those rejected could have been prevented or cured by proper school instruction in sanitation and hygiene and by provision for healthful school conditions. Illiteracy was found to be very extensive also, and the lack of intelligent and specific training for citizenship through the public-school system was also revealed. But out of these revelations came wholesome influences for and fresh interest in new conceptions of education. Before the close of the war a strong impetus was given to physical training as a part of the program of preparedness, and the need for physical and health education and for instruction in hygiene and sanitation found ready recognition among school and governing authorities and the public generally.



General health regulations and the physical examination of school children, which had begun in Texas in 1890, had been provided for in some form in most of the States before the recent war, but during the past few years there has been a marked tendency to extend such provisions in an effort to protect the health of the child and the community. The movement continues to gain; it now includes the examination and medical inspection of children for physical defects, provision for their correction by free or inexpensive treatment under expert supervision, and provisions for detecting and preventing the spread of communicable diseases, for the employment of school and community nurses, for the regulation of schoolhouse construction, and for the use of sanitary drinking cups and the improvement of school conditions generally.<sup>1</sup>

Renewed efforts are being made—largely as a result of the war—to eliminate illiteracy, with which the South has been and still is shamefully burdened, and to provide more adequate and intelligent instruction and training in the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. Agencies for stamping out illiteracy are found in the "moonlight schools" and in the work of "illiteracy commissions" and of community schools for adult illiterates. Special attention has recently been given to the problem of illiteracy by North Carolina, South Carolina, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Laws designed to promote citizenship instruction have been enacted or extended, and the indications are that this problem is to receive more attention in the future. The energy of the elementary school is, of course, still very properly devoted in large measure to instruction in certain traditional but fundamental processes in reading, writing, and arithmetic and to history and geography. Other

<sup>1</sup> Recent investigations show that 52 per cent of the children in typical rural schools give evidence of malnutrition, while less than 3 per cent of city school children so suffer. More than 57 per cent of the children in rural schools have defective eyes and 51 per cent are subject to anæmia, while the statistics for the children in city schools are 5 per cent and 20 per cent respectively.

subjects have gradually found nominal places in the curriculum, but they have not received proper recognition promptly, and in some cases instruction in them has often been perfunctory rather than real. The tendency now, however, appears to be toward the recognition of new and more rational objectives of public-school education, so that not only may proficiency in the so-called fundamentals be increased by application to new materials and real situations but sane and worthy attitudes toward wide social interests and personal and civic duties and privileges may be developed in the pupils.<sup>1</sup>

The ready acceptance by the Southern States of the appropriations under the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 for the maintenance of extension work (especially in agriculture and home economics) and of appropriations under the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 for Federal aid to vocational education is significant as a part of the movement to correlate public education with the industrial life of the people.<sup>2</sup> Under the latter legislation funds are appropriated by the Federal Government for the purpose of cooperating with the various States in providing suitable instruction in agricultural, trade, home-economics, and industrial subjects and in the preparation of teachers of such vocational subjects. The funds for promoting agricultural instruction are apportioned to the States in the propor-

<sup>1</sup>Textbooks for use in the elementary schools are generally selected in each of the Southern States by a state textbook commission or by the state board of education serving in that capacity. Textbook legislation of recent years presents no especially distinctive or progressive features, but the development has been from county to state uniformity in most of the States, and uniform state adoption for various periods now prevails. The policy of free textbooks has not been adopted, though it has been for some time a subject of legislative consideration in many of the States.

<sup>2</sup>Corn clubs among the boys began in Mississippi in 1907 and tomato clubs among the girls began in South Carolina in 1910, and in a few years these activities had gathered wide interest in all the Southern States. Such clubs still serve important educational and economic purposes, and tens of thousands of boys and girls are enrolled in them. Manual training has also gained recognition in the schools of the cities since 1900 and is now finding a place in the larger consolidated rural schools.

tion which the number of their respective rural inhabitants bears to the total number of rural inhabitants in the United States; and for instruction in trade, home-economics, and industrial subjects the funds are apportioned to the States in the proportion which the number of their urban population bears to the urban population of the United States. In order to receive the benefits of the funds each State was required to accept the provisions of and adopt plans acceptable to the Federal Board for Vocational Education and to coöperate with the Board. The requirement was also made that each State, or local authorities therein, or both, expend for these purposes an amount equal to that expended by the Federal Government. This Act, which apportioned more than half a million dollars to the Southern States in 1918, has met with wide favor and promises to help develop a strong system of vocational education.<sup>1</sup>

Other hopeful signs of educational progress appear in the tendency to improve the status of the public-school teacher. In most of the States effort is being made to raise and standardize the requirements of the qualifications to teach and to make provision for the teachers to meet such requirements by enlarging training facilities through more definite instruction in normal schools, institutes, and summer normals, reading-circle work,<sup>2</sup> and the establishment of teacher-training classes in standard high schools. The tendency is toward state rather than county certification of teachers, toward the issuance of several special certificates, and toward accrediting approved university and college diplomas and accepting credentials of teachers from other States. The increased difficulty

<sup>1</sup>Second Annual Report of the Federal Board for Vocational Education, 1918. The sums appropriated by the Act increase each year until 1925-1926. In that year the total national aid for the purposes mentioned above will amount to more than seven millions a year, and this sum will be annually appropriated among the various States of the Union.

<sup>2</sup>Reading-circle work in many of the States is poorly planned and poorly directed and is at best haphazard and colorless, tolerated by teacher and local administrator alike. Its possibilities have not been fully realized generally.

of finding suitable living-quarters for teachers (especially in the rural communities) has served to stimulate the movement for teachers' "cottages," teachers' "homes," or "teacherages," in connection with the schoolhouses. Incidentally this problem of living-conditions for teachers has had effect on the consolidation movement, which is gaining in the South. Slight beginnings have been made in providing pensions for teachers in Virginia and Tennessee and in certain cities, among which are Charleston, Mobile, New Orleans, and Raleigh, but the movement has not yet attracted wide attention in the South.

To furnish the type of education now needed in the South certain fundamental reorganizations seem imperative. The conception of the place and importance of education needs to be enlarged through a new emphasis on educational leadership and expert direction in all parts of the public-school system—in organization, administration, support, instruction, and supervision. If public education is to be as adequate and safe as the conditions now require, there needs to be applied throughout an improved type of intelligent direction and control—expert and professional skill and business ability; otherwise the State can never be fully active and effective in promoting the moral and intellectual welfare of its people.

It is apparent that in most of the Southern States changes need to be made in the composition of the state board of educational control. At present such boards are composed of state officers, who are elected for other purposes and are not expected to have any special knowledge of or interest in public schools, or they consist of appointed members with only nominal power of direction. Instead of the constitutional board composed of state officers, or the appointive board with nominal functions, the need is for a small board of representative men and women who are recognized for their sane and progressive attitudes toward and their demonstrated ability to promote public educational work.

Another point of weakness generally found in the South is the method of selecting the state superintendent of public schools (see page 443). The importance of this officer is now both potentially



and actually so great as to require the highest type of leadership available. The superintendent of the public schools of the State now has many more important and far-reaching functions than ever before. The need is not for a clerk, a statistician, a politician, or a professor and lecturer at large, but rather for a guardian, trustee, and director of all the public educational interests of the commonwealth. He is the director-general of the moral and intellectual well-being of the whole people. He is the State's educational *entrepreneur*, and his functions are to initiate, establish, and maintain progressive and effective relations among the State's multiform educational agencies. He must now promote improvement through initiating and coöperating in the enactment of wise and forward-looking legislation on organization, courses of study, textbooks, school finances, administration, supervision, attendance, school-library extension, child-welfare work, building programs, the training, certification, and pensioning of teachers, and a host of other vital matters.

These duties demand a high order of business and executive ability as well as professional skill. For that reason the state superintendent of public schools should be a recognized leader in educational work, with a keen sense of duty, broad scholarship, a large vision of the educational and social needs of the State he is serving, and with an unselfishness that approaches the apostolic. No other officer of the average American state has so strategic a place for moral and social leadership as the superintendent of schools.

It is an established principle in political science that expert and skilled leaders cannot be selected by popular election. If the state superintendent of public schools is to become a real educational leader in fact, the method of selecting him must be changed from that of popular election to appointment by governing authority or by a responsible and intelligent board of educational control. The task of the superintendency requires a training and a skill in educational administration and other high abilities which are rarely ever at home with those qualities which so often commend men to

the political leaders and bosses or managers of political parties. This important officer should therefore be selected for his professional training and skill, and the choice should not be limited to the narrow bounds of the State, as is necessary when the selection is by popular vote. The financial reward should be large enough and the tenure of office secure enough to attract the highest talent available anywhere.

It seems desirable also that there should be a larger unit of local administration than that which now exists in actual practice. For purposes of local business administration the Southern States are subdivided into counties,<sup>1</sup> which are also natural units for the successful administration of public education. In theory at least the county is the educational unit now generally used in the South, but in actual practice the usual form of organization and administration is the local district, under the control of a local board of trustees and therefore loosely knit together in the county organization. The local boards ordinarily carry on their work with no concern or interest beyond their own districts and with little unity of purpose or conception of broad educational policies. For these reasons the schools, especially the rural schools, often suffer from ineffective teachers, poor equipment, and an almost total lack of progressive, helpful supervision.

As pointed out above, the district system is that generally employed in rural educational administration in the South, and the district units rather than the county units usually direct public-school affairs. Under this practice a uniform system of schools can never be made to extend over the entire county. The organization is largely by locality, which can never be made entire, but must remain one-sided in its development. Moreover, the cost of such a system is necessarily excessive and wasteful and otherwise pernicious and antiquated. The local district system needs to be replaced by the county as the unit of organization, support, administration, and supervision; and through this larger unit of support and control all public elementary and secondary schools

<sup>1</sup> In Louisiana the parish corresponds to the county in other States.

and all other educational agencies of the county should be consolidated and coördinated into one system with sound financial support and expert business and professional direction. Then and then only will the rural child of the South enjoy the educational opportunities now afforded the child of the town and city.

In addition there appears an urgent need for the development of a new type of county board of educational control. The relation of the county board to the county superintendent is similar to that of the state board to the state superintendent. Properly conceived its functions and responsibilities are numerous and heavy, and on the proper discharge of them depends very largely the success of the school work which the board is called on to direct. To be really effective and useful in assisting the county superintendent in carrying out progressive educational policies the county board should have powers and duties not unlike those of a city school board. The members should be chosen from the citizens at large and for reasonably long terms. They should be selected for their recognized ability to direct the large enterprise of a county's school work and for their evident belief and interest in public educational progress rather than for political reasons.

A new conception of the office of county superintendent of schools is also needed in the South. It cannot be emphasized too often nor too strongly that this officer is strategically the most important in all public educational activities of the county. He should be a well-trained educational expert and executive, and chosen for professional and administrative fitness rather than for political purposes. The importance of this executive requires appointment by a responsible and progressive board of control who is interested more in the educational advancement of the county than in partisan politics. Popular elections have no proper place in filling such an office. The functions of the office are executive and professional in character and require a high degree of skill acquired by special training or long experience, and choice of a superintendent should not be limited to the county or even to the State. Boards of educational control should have freedom to seek

anywhere for leadership and competency, otherwise the county superintendent must continue to be regarded as the political officer or clerk which tradition has made of him rather than the real professional leader which the conditions now so urgently require.<sup>1</sup>

The need for closer and more effective supervision of rural-school work is coming to be more and more keenly felt in the South. Educational leaders are coming to see that one large secret of better educational facilities in the towns and cities is due to more expert supervision of the urban schools. The compactness of their organization aids coördination and direction and lends itself to a more wholesome coöperation of teachers, school officials, and the public generally. In the nature of the case the rural-school teacher suffers from a lack of frequent personal contact with other teachers and is thus denied the stimulation and professional enthusiasm that comes from sympathetic supervision and assistance. A new form of supervision for the rural school is therefore urgently needed and must be created and maintained if there is to be secured for the children of the country the educational advantages to which they are entitled. It is encouraging to see that the tendency in many of the Southern States is toward a more rational reorganization and improvement in supervisory direction which promises to help put the rural-school system on the same basis with the better-organized systems of the towns and cities.

One of the most confusing problems now facing the South is that of the proper education of the negro. It is a problem which calls for intelligent and sympathetic attention. After nearly two and a half centuries of slavery the negro was suddenly and without any preparation charged with the solemn obligations and privileges of citizenship. Since that time the problem of his education has been big and immediate, but effort at the solution has been earnest and often energetic. But after nearly sixty years its

<sup>1</sup> In many States the qualifications of the county superintendent of schools are nominal only and at best very low, and in some States the system of selection limits the choice to the county.



perplexities persist and the answer has admittedly not yet been found. Now the task of educating several million Negroes in the South appears to be larger than that of giving them formal school-room instruction or of teaching them to read, to write, and to cipher. It is, of course, a task which requires provisions of adequate facilities for such instruction, but it also calls for instruction and training by which they can more readily and safely adjust themselves to the environment in which they live and by which there can be awakened and sustained in them a keen sense of their responsibilities to the community and the State. Only by this means also can there be developed among their white neighbors a correct understanding and wholesome appreciation of the real value of the Negro as an economic asset to the South and to the nation.

The causes which have retarded the growth of education for the Negro child are principally those which have served to delay the development of education for the white child in the Southern States. Funds have been inadequate, and a dual system of public schools has been necessary and required,—one system for the colored and another for the white children. Both systems have been poor when compared with the public-school systems of many other sections of the country, but they were the best that conditions would permit. Nevertheless the poor quality of the schools gave rise to distrust and natural misgivings concerning the value of public education. This is obviously one reason why the education of the Negro has been so troublesome and discouraging. Moreover, the relation between education and personal health, public safety, economic wealth, and civic betterment generally has not yet been definitely and fully established in the minds of most of the Negroes themselves or of many others who have seemed interested in their education. This failure or neglect has been due not alone to the meager educational provisions and to the lack of the proper kind of leadership among the Negroes but also to the false conceptions which zealous but often indiscreet reformers have had of education for the Negro. And their activities have often served to retard rather than to promote the just cause of Negro education.

In the face of these discouraging conditions, most of which were inherited from the period of and immediately following the Civil War, public sentiment for the proper education of the Negroes has been gaining in recent years, and educational opportunity for them is now more rapidly extending. This appears in improvements in the training of teachers, in the increase in high-school instruction, in better school buildings, and in supplying other educational needs of the colored children. Since the emancipation of the Negroes there was never a time when the people of the South were so ready as now to help provide more adequate facilities for Negro education. In many of the States county training schools have been established for the preparation of teachers and the improvement of those already in service; better salaries are being paid; the normal schools are being improved and enlarged; safer health regulations are being enforced; well-trained supervisors are being employed in increasing numbers; and the state programs for negro education generally are more liberal than ever before.

The work of the Jeanes Fund, the Slater Fund, the General Education Board, the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and the Rosenwald Fund, in coöperation with state and county educational authorities, has served to develop a better sentiment for the education of the negro. The silent campaigns for health, cleanliness, industry and thrift, coöperation, better teachers and better schoolhouses (which the assistance of such agencies has promoted), have helped to win a way for the public education of the colored child. Agents of the Jeanes Fund operate effectively, training schools have been set up and maintained in numerous counties by aid from the Slater Fund and from the county and state funds, and through these schools new interest has been given to industrial education, sanitation, home-making, teaching-training, and other vital interests of the colored people. Assistance from the General Education Board, through the support of state agents of rural schools for negroes, is yet another useful service for negro education in the South. More recently the Rosenwald Fund has begun assistance in building schoolhouses for Negroes.

In the past the South has not been able to boast of achievement for the public education of the negro. And there is yet much to be done for his education. But the various States have recently faced in the right direction. The lack of the negro's industrial skill has served to retard the economic progress of the South, and so long as adequate and proper educational provision is not made this condition will continue to prevail. The South is rapidly coming to see that instruction and training in industrial skill will carry also valuable lessons in economy and thrift, in health habits, cleanliness, and respectability, and in regard for order and for law. The properly educated negro has not only a larger earning capacity but higher ideals of living. He lives in a better home, wears better clothes, has more wholesome food for himself and his family, has better health and higher moral standards, is ambitious for the proper education and the decent rearing of his children, is a more effective worker and thus helps to create more wealth, and in times of difficulty or race friction is always on the side of law and order. He is a more useful and contented citizen than the uneducated, unintelligent, or improperly trained negro.<sup>1</sup>

The real progress of education for the negro in the South is to be measured, therefore, by an increase in his industry and thrift, in the exhibition of the virtues of self-restraint, and in the practice of good habits of citizenship. These qualities and abilities can be promoted only by adequate educational facilities and the right kind of leadership. But the real success of the negro as an effective and productive citizen depends for him, as for the white man, more on his behavior and his sense of social responsibility than on his technical or formal educational achievement. To these ends the elementary-school system for the negro children needs to be strengthened and improved by providing better-trained teachers, better houses and equipment, and closer supervision. The curriculum of the elementary school needs to be related more

<sup>1</sup>It is estimated that more than 112,000 negro workers in the South are sick and incapacitated for work all the time, and that the annual economic loss from preventable illness and deaths of these negroes is nearly \$50,000,000.

closely to the daily life of the negro, with more effective and practical instruction in agriculture, gardening, household arts, home-making and simple industries, health, sanitation, morality, cleanliness, and the fundamentals of good citizenship. The facilities for training teachers for the negro schools need to be increased, and more industrial and agricultural secondary schools need to be provided in all the Southern States.

The Southern States have always been primarily agricultural; and the principal sources of their wealth are still in the soil. Approximately 80 per cent of the people live in the rural sections and follow farming as an occupation. The permanent prosperity and well-being of the South, therefore, are closely dependent upon the prosperity and well-being of the rural population, for whatever affects their welfare affects also the South and the nation. It is for this reason that the strategic point in the South's future growth appears in the kind of provision that is made for the education and training of the large army of rural children.

From the facts pointed out above it is evident that adequate educational facilities have not yet been provided for these children and that equality of educational opportunity does not exist for them. Differences between the educational advantage offered the children of the country and those provided for the children of the towns and cities are glaring. In available school funds, in buildings and equipment, in length of school term, in effective teaching, in organization, subject matter, and supervision, in teachers' salaries, and in numerous other particulars the rural school is generally inferior to the school in the town or city.

The available school funds for each town or city child are more than twice that provided for each rural child in the South. The value of the school property provided for each city child is between three and four times greater than that provided for the rural child. The annual salary of the city teacher is nearly twice that now paid the rural teacher. In several of the Southern States the school term provided for the rural children is 30 per cent shorter than that provided for the city children. In these and other ways the



city child is favored, and in the public mind he is regarded as deserving a larger and better educational opportunity than that now provided for the country child. These conditions make it evident that equal educational rights are not guaranteed to the larger number of the children of the South.

The differences between the educational facilities afforded the city child and those offered the country child are numerous. A bright boy in a typical rural school in the South receives fewer than two visits a year from a supervising school officer. He is taught by a teacher who probably holds a certificate lower than that of the standard grade issued by the State. Moreover, that teacher is undertaking to do from four to seven grades of work. She has from twenty-five to thirty-five daily recitations of from only ten to twelve minutes each. At best the bright boy in the rural school receives only about fifty-five or sixty minutes' instruction each day, or about one sixth of his school time. The rest of his time he is forced to spend aimlessly at his desk, with the resulting tendency toward idleness and other evils which appear when children are not properly supervised and directed.

Another boy of the same age and of the same mental capacity finds the case different in a well-graded town or rural consolidated school. At the head of this school is a well-trained principal or supervisor, who visits the various rooms daily or several times each week to assist the teachers. In most cases these teachers are well trained, hold standard certificates, and are allowed to teach only a limited number of recitations each day. This city boy has a much larger annual school term and receives daily a much larger part of the teacher's time for actual class instruction—perhaps three or four times as much as that provided for the boy in the typical rural school.

These facts mean that the Southern States have not yet provided adequate educational advantages for fully four fifths of their children, that rural education has not yet been standardized and modernized, and that it has not been touched by the spirit of improvement which has been marked in urban education in recent

years. They mean that to make better provision for the education of the children who live in the rural districts the Southern States have a distinct obligation, and that this task calls for intelligent thought and a high type of educational leadership. Thoughtful consideration of the discrimination that now exists against four fifths of the children of the South leads to certain important questions: How can the educational advantages now enjoyed by the 20 per cent be enjoyed also by the other 80 per cent? How can the rural children be provided with safer and better school buildings, equipment, and grounds, better-trained teachers, richer courses of study, closer and more helpful supervision and direction, and numerous other advantages now denied them?<sup>1</sup>

The best experience of the country shows that the answer to these questions is found in the consolidation of the small ineffective schools into larger, better-organized, and more closely directed schools. Consolidation means provision for enlarged educational opportunity. It means concentrated and purposeful educational effort. It means better teachers and more effective training for the large army of boys and girls of the rural sections, many of whom are now forced to depend on the small, ineffective schools for practically all the educational training they ever receive. In several States consolidation has proved itself a forward step toward providing equality of educational opportunity for all the children, and through it many of the persistent problems now facing rural education in the South can be solved.

Consolidation means the union of small, weak, poorly graded, poorly attended, and poorly taught schools into a large, strong, and well-graded school, properly located, adequately equipped, and effectively taught by competent, well-trained teachers. The one-teacher or one-room school is inferior to the larger and better-directed school. Its natural limitations are many, and it cannot give the children and the community the service needed. The

<sup>1</sup>In 1918 the number of rural schools having only one room varied from 42 per cent in Texas to 81 per cent in Arkansas. More than 65 per cent of all the rural schools in the South at that time had only one room.

purpose of the consolidated school is to afford a larger and better educational service to the community it is set up to serve. Intelligent consolidation gives comfortable, safe, and adequate school buildings, equipment, and grounds, and an adequate number of teachers with sufficient time to do effectively the work in the usual elementary-school and secondary-school subjects and in manual training, domestic science and domestic art, agriculture, and other subjects demanded by the needs of the times. The teacher of the small, one-room school, with its various grades of work, now finds it well-nigh impossible to give proper attention to the prescribed subjects, to say nothing of directing any work whatever in the modern subjects which find a place in the larger and better-organized schools in the towns and cities.

Results that follow from actual cases of consolidation show the following distinct advantages of the plan :

1. Intelligent consolidation means a larger taxable area, and thus makes the district strong and financially more effective than the smaller, weaker district can possibly be.

2. It means more comfortable, convenient, and attractive and better-equipped school buildings. In such buildings the health and the morals of the children are safeguarded to a greater degree than is possible in the smaller, one-room schools.

3. Because of the more nearly adequate salaries and the opportunity afforded for an effective and agreeable division of labor and for more systematized work, the consolidated school insures better-trained teachers, who are willing to remain for long terms in the same communities.

4. The intelligently consolidated school makes possible a more nearly complete course of study, including the high-school subjects, agriculture, domestic science, industrial arts, drawing, music, and other courses which are always found in the best type of modern schools.

5. The consolidated school affords a better grading and classification of pupils and a general standardization of the entire work. More time can be given to each recitation, thus increasing

the opportunity of the individual pupil for thoroughness of work. Better-organized class instruction, such as that found in the consolidated schools, becomes a source of inspiration and thus assists in the development of leadership. In the consolidated school the time of the teacher is not frittered away by having to teach such a large number of classes daily.

6. In the consolidated school opportunity is afforded for a closer and more intelligent supervision which is now impracticable in rural sections with dozens of little schools scattered all over the county. Such supervision improves the effectiveness of the teachers and furnishes the professional contacts now denied the teachers of the small schools.

7. The consolidated school affords the child the chance to secure a high-school education near his own home, an opportunity now by no means within the reach of most country boys and girls in the South. Larger numbers of such boys and girls would then enter the high school, because the consolidated school would make provision for adequate high-school instruction.

8. By means of the adequately equipped consolidated school a great saving is thus made possible in the expense of sending children away from home for high-school training or preparation for college.

9. The consolidated school stimulates and develops a more wholesome and attractive community spirit and interest, which are reflected by church, social, and other community organizations and activities.

10. The consolidated school enriches and strengthens the lives of the boys and girls and the men and women of the community which it serves. Larger classes than are usually found in the small rural schools add to the interest of the pupils. The stimulation thus afforded serves to broaden the lives and the interests of the children and to hold them in school.

11. Intelligent consolidation tends to develop a more healthy spirit and interest in the school and in the community. The debating clubs, literary societies, musical clubs, athletic contests,



parent-teachers' associations, and other organizations for the men and the women of the community tend to create a wholesome spirit which is not possible in the small community of the one-room school. Pride and public interest are quickened and confidence and enthusiasm are inspired by varied social activities made possible in the community of the consolidated school.

12. Experience shows that the consolidated school insures the enrollment of a larger percentage of the children of school age, insures a better attendance of those enrolled, affords a longer term, keeps the boys and girls in school, accomplishes greater results in the same length of time, secures better management and better discipline because better organized than the smaller school, insures more competent school officials by having a larger district from which to select them, and affords all the children the same chances for better educational advantages which, under the small-district school system, only a small number now have. What is now the privilege of a few will then become equally the opportunity of all. The consolidated school makes compliance with the compulsory-attendance law more nearly feasible and justifiable; it helps to eliminate truancy, to reduce irregular attendance, and to reduce tardiness to a minimum; it enhances the value of farm lands and real estate in the community served by the school and is closely related to public interest in good roads and improved transportation facilities.

The consolidation of schools naturally involves the transportation of the pupils. This is one of the difficult parts of successful consolidation, and upon the successful solution of this difficulty depends in large measure the success of consolidation. Failure at this point means complete failure of the plan. But if the Southern States carry out successfully the creditable road-building programs now in process and in contemplation, this problem of consolidation will sooner or later become relatively easy of solution. The condition of the roads, however, while naturally somewhat affecting transportation, need not always be its greatest hindrance. If roads are passable for any other kind of wagon it will be practicable

for the school wagon to get over them. In most cases school wagons or motor busses can be employed. Experience shows that wherever the roads are of the improved kind the motor truck or motor bus is more satisfactory and advantageous, but wherever the roads are unimproved the horse-drawn wagon has been found to give highly satisfactory results. The manufacture of school wagons and motor trucks has now come to be a large industry. They are strongly built, well ventilated, and equipped with safe heating appliances, so that the children can travel long distances to school with much greater comfort, greater safety, and less danger to their health than when walking through bad weather or over bad roads to the small school in the community.

In the main the Southern States have already generally accepted the principle of rural-school consolidation, but they have not yet practically applied the principle as extensively and as wisely as the needs seem to require. It appears, however, that thoughtful school boards and superintendents are beginning to take seriously the subject of making the rural school more effective, and to that end are looking to consolidation and transportation as outstanding means by which this can be done. This feature of rural-school work is now claiming more attention than ever before in the South.

Too often, however, the tendency has been to consolidate with reference to the desires of localities rather than with reference to the needs of the county at large. For that reason it appears important that the county board and the superintendent look at their county as a whole, rather than at its various parts or local districts, if intelligent consolidation is to be made throughout the entire county. By viewing the county as a whole the officials and the people are enabled to coöperate and to act more intelligently in redistricting the county and in planning for a permanent school system. To get such a view, adequate and complete, it would seem essential that the board and the superintendent be in possession of data such as the following:

1. Information concerning the general external and internal school conditions of the entire county is needed. This can be had

by an impartial, sympathetic, fair, and accurate statement of actual facts, both statistical and informational in character. Such a statement can, of course, be best prepared by the superintendent, though it may sometimes be necessary for him to have assistance with the details. The statement should be prepared in full and in writing and so made as to be easily and intelligently understood by the board and by the average citizen of the county. Technical terms and the so-called "survey" terminology should be avoided, as well as the attitude that often appears in the survey. The statement should above all be sympathetic rather than critical.

2. On such a statement helpful, practical suggestions and recommendations for improvement should be made. These should also be in writing and so stated as to be easily and intelligently understood by both the board and the average citizen.

3. An adequate, up-to-date map of the county should be prepared and used, because graphic illustration conveys definite ideas more readily and safely. On such a map information such as the following should be shown:

(a) The boundaries of the present school districts.

(b) The location of each schoolhouse.

(c) The location of each home, with the number of school children in each.

(d) All roads should be shown. The present condition of the roads should also be indicated, and all road-building projects in process or in contemplation by the county and the state-highway board should be taken into account in this connection.

(e) All natural barriers, such as rivers, creeks, swamps, and mountains, should be shown.

4. Accurate information should also be had concerning

(a) The general school interest of each school district.

(b) The size of each school district and the number of children in it.

(c) The size of each schoolhouse.

(d) The school population, the enrollment, and the average daily attendance of each school district.

(e) The general attitude of the people of each school district on the subject of the consolidation of schools and the transportation of pupils. This can be safely gained only by tact, patience, and innumerable personal interviews. In most cases it will be gained very slowly. Undue agitation does not advance the cause.

With such information properly in hand and properly digested by the board and the superintendent, a tentative plan for redistricting the county can be made with a view to wise consolidation. After such a plan is worked out another map should be prepared showing the proposed new districts as well as the old districts to be retained. The board and the superintendent will, of course, be prepared to give sufficient reasons for any and all changes proposed, and, if occasion should require, they should be able to set forth convincingly the advantages of the proposed changes and to meet the objections to them.

Meantime there should be carried on a systematic policy of intelligent publicity all over the county—through the newspapers, the motion-picture service, the county-school newspaper, extension work by community meetings, or regular communications from the board and the superintendent to the people. For this purpose an up-to-date mailing list of the active citizens of the county should be kept in the superintendent's office.

The experience of practically all the States shows conclusively that there are two ways to consolidate schools in the rural sections. Consolidation may be made by giving attention to the effect of the redistricting and of each proposed consolidation on the entire county, or it may be gained by considering the effect on only the most interested districts. It may be made by acting honestly in the interests of all the children to be served by it, so as to provide the most adequate educational advantages with the least hardship to the greatest number of these children, or it may be had by acting in accordance with the desires of a few influential people in the various communities who may be moved by local or selfish purposes.



Consolidation may be gained by locating the new house properly (that is, as nearly as possible in the center of the school population of the proposed new district, where it will conveniently serve the largest number of children), or it may be had by locating the house near the homes of certain influential people in the community. It may be made by wisely delaying final action until the time is ripe and public sentiment has been developed so as to place the house at the proper and logical point, or it may be made by hasty action in locating the new house away from the logical and sensible center. An ill-advised plan hastily entered into produces annoyance and confusion and leads eventually to another change which often proves costly both in money and community interest.

Consolidation may be secured by a careful consideration of the funds available or to be available for it, by a careful counting of the cost of the new undertaking; or it may be had by neglecting this important point in the enthusiasm of the moment. It is highly important to count the cost accurately. This prevents misunderstanding and numerous troubles. Failure here is likely to bring the new plan promptly into disrepute.

Consolidation may be had by keeping in mind the children of the remote parts of the new district and by carefully planning the routes so that transportation for all such children will be comfortably provided for; or it can be had by assigning to the new school certain children who live at long walking distances away, without providing for their transportation. Walking unreasonable distances should not be required of some children if any children are to be transported. Every child is entitled to thoughtful consideration in this highly important matter.

Consolidation may be had in the right way, so as to give wholesome and effective results. Educational interest will then grow in strength and wide popularity. But unwise consolidation will eventually destroy educational interest in the community and give the cause disastrous setbacks from which it will be difficult to recover.

Real and lasting progress in the South depends for its promotion very largely upon economic wealth, the willingness to use that wealth for the advancement of public well-being, and the vision of the leaders and governing authorities and their attitude toward certain interests. Among these interests are the building and maintenance of modern roads and highways, the encouragement of progressive methods of agriculture, and the promotion of public education, public health, and public welfare generally. Rural life in the South can never be made wholesome and inviting and satisfying except through the full development of these essential factors.

Happily for public education and the betterment of rural life advancement along these lines is now more promising than formerly. Road-building is receiving more attention, and creditable programs of scientific road construction have been set in motion as an important part of the growing business of the various States. To local and state funds are now added millions of Federal funds which are available for the building and maintenance of highways. Improved road machinery is being bought, the best engineers are being secured, and armies of road-builders are being employed in construction and maintenance work. A new day for good roads is at hand in the South. The advancement of the Southern States in agricultural practices and in the production of wealth is also marked. Farm crops have increased from threefold to fivefold, bank resources have increased in similar manner, and the economic position of the Southern States has so greatly advanced during the past decade that they cannot longer be classified as poor. But the primary wealth of any people lies in the minds and hearts of its citizens, and no prosperity can be of advantage if the level of citizenship and public wholesomeness is not thereby advanced through education and leadership and if the coming generation is not thus better equipped to bear the increasing burdens of democracy.

The World War drew sharp attention to public educational weaknesses and defects. Other influences now promise to give

impetus to greater educational interest and endeavor during the next generation. Already those influences are being felt. Educational organization in the South promises to be set up on the more sensible basis of the county as the correct unit for support, administration, and supervision, so as to embrace and furnish every child an educational opportunity equal to that of every other child. The rural school will eventually be put on a more nearly equal footing with the city school, and provision will be made for its adequate support and direction and the enrichment of its curriculum. There will be called to the support and stimulation of rural education the American doctrine of taxation on all the property of the State for the equal education of all the children of the State. Sound business and professional principles will be employed in public educational work, which will then increase in dignity. The financial returns and the tenure of administrators and teachers will be made larger and more secure. Emancipation of education from petty politics, it is to be hoped, will finally be secured, and the State will take more seriously the important work of public education. Then the public schools will attract the strongest men and women as directors and teachers and be regarded as sound and safe in their practices and more nearly in line with our boasted democracy and the spirit of American institutions.

Education is now, as it has always been, the most important need of the South. This need is not for education in its narrow, traditional, or academic sense, however, but for that kind of instruction and training which will awaken sound interest and enthusiasm for personal wholesomeness and public well-being, enlighten public opinion, and direct and lead the energies of men and women to human service and to the preservation and improvement of free government. The need now, more than ever before, is for that type of public education which will make paramount for all the people effective instruction and training in correct ideals and practices of personal obligations and of civic responsibilities. Then the people will observe with intelligence and faithfulness all the numerous social and political relations under which they live,

exercise their rights with order and justice, and perform their duties with discretion and competence. Then and then only can they understand what is going on in the world and keep their part of it going on right.

### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION AND FURTHER STUDY

1. Why is public education in rural communities less advanced than in towns and cities?
2. Study the ten tests of efficiency of public schools given by Ayres and described in this chapter, and apply them to the school system of your State. Do you consider these representative measures of a school system's effectiveness? Why? Note the rank of your State for the various periods and explain the causes of its loss or gain.
3. How does your State compare with the United States at large in (a) length of school term, (b) salaries of teachers, (c) percentage of school population in average daily attendance, (d) percentage of school population in high schools, (e) average annual expenditure per child of school age and per child attending school?
4. Calculate the waste of school expenditures on account of non-attendance and compare it with the average for the United States and for the South.
5. Study the recent development of rural high schools and point out the needs of this part of the school system in your State. In how many counties, if any, in your State have standard public high schools not been established?
6. Why is the South lacking in an adequate supply of well-trained teachers? Give the principal ways by which a sufficient number can be recruited and retained in the profession.
7. Note the percentage of the teachers in your county who are teaching this year for the first time and compare it with the average for the State.
8. Compare the teachers' examination and certificating practices in your State with those of other Southern States and point out their points of strength and of weakness.
9. Compare your State with other States in (a) method of school support; (b) adoption of textbooks; (c) provisions for compulsory attendance, child labor, public health, physical examination of school



children, and public welfare; (d) provisions for the elimination of adult illiteracy and for the enrichment of the curriculum and for citizenship training; (e) vocational and industrial instruction.

10. (a) Point out the advantages of the county unit for the organization, administration, support, and supervision of rural education. (b) What are the disadvantages of the popular election of school superintendents? (c) What in your opinion are the principal needs of rural education in your State today?

11. (a) List the arguments for and against consolidation of rural schools. (b) What are the legal qualifications for county superintendents in your State? (c) How has the education of the negro improved in your State during the past ten years?

12. How many one-room schools in your State? in your County? How many small rural schools have been eliminated by consolidation in your State during the past five years? How many have been eliminated in your County during that time? What are the chief obstacles to consolidation in your State? in your County?

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